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RECRUITING OUTSIDE THE BOX

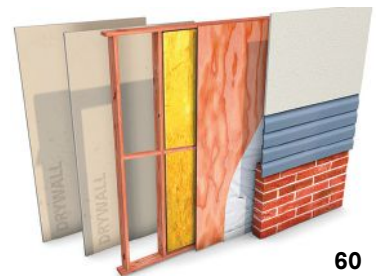
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Leading
Suppliers Council

To our stakeholders

EARLIER IN MY CAREER (pre-*LBM Journal*), I wrote a monthly letter to a board of directors, with detailed financial information and strategic updates into what my teammates and I were doing to drive their magazine forward. *LBM Journal* remains independent, with no corporate overlords or board of directors, so we report only to you, our readers and advertisers. Because you are our stakeholders, I like to update you periodically on what's going on with your media company.

You may have heard that print is dead. To paraphrase Mark Twain, rumors of print's death are exaggerated. It's true that many print publications have either gone digital only or out of business, I assure you that, in our industry, print is far from dead. At *LBM Journal*, it remains our single biggest source

of revenue, which means it's still working for advertisers. And that's no surprise, as our quarter research shows 55% of our readers read only the print edition vs. 16% who read only the digital edition—the remaining 29% read both print and digital. (True story: in 2008, the head of the largest publisher in residential construction announced a “digital-first strategy.” I wondered if this much-larger competitor knew something I didn't. Our latest research showed that nearly 90% of our subscribers preferred print. As the other guys pivoted to a digital-first strategy, we stuck with our “customer-first strategy.” Without going into details, we learned that it pays to listen to your customers.)

Our big news is that we recently added a full-time managing editor to the *LBM Journal* team. Mike Berger is a seasoned business journalist with an extensive background in the LBM and hardware industries. If his name looks familiar, that's because he's been researching and writing our every-issue “In Depth” product features. With the print magazine remaining strong, and our digital offerings (daily newsletter, website, webinars, podcasts) and annual event growing, our team was stretched thin (which I know is something many of you are wrestling with). Mike is already working closely with our creative team, Editor James Anderson and Creative Director Richard Hart, to deliver more of the insights you rely on to grow your business.

While I get to share these successes with you, nothing happens without the incredible *LBM Journal* team. This small-but-mighty group punches far above its weight, and they're at the heart of all that we do—including the annual LBM Strategies Conference, which will be held October 12-14 in Denver. As I write this, we have nearly 150 LBM dealers and distributors already registered, and an agenda that has more than 25 LBM pros taking the stage to share their insights. If you'd like to attend an event where the dealer/distributor attendees far outnumber sponsors—we'd love to see you in Denver!

When you talk, we listen. We have some exciting initiatives underway, based on what you've told us you want and need. Without you, our customers and stakeholders, we don't exist. On behalf of the entire *LBM Journal* team, thank you for your support, and for letting us help you grow your sales, your business, and your brand.



Rick@LBMJournal.com

— Rick Schumacher
Executive Editor & Publisher



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Celebrating the century-old companies

OFTEN THE STORIES I get to share in our monthly dealer profiles include glimpses into the pasts of entire towns or communities. It's unavoidable, considering many of the dealers featured are fourth or fifth generation companies. When a lumberyard is around that long, its products inevitably make up the homes, schools, churches, and stores that form a community. Never is that more evident than in this month's profile of Barden Lumber on page 48.

This year, Paul Barden's company is celebrating 100 years of service to Boyne City, Michigan. Now the fourth generation of the Barden family to head up the lumberyard, Paul sees the impact his family has had in his community, as his great-grandfather's name is attached to many other organizations in town also celebrating a centennial anniversary this year. No doubt he sees that impact as well in the buildings his company has helped build.

Ours is an industry in which a 100-year anniversary, while absolutely worth celebrating, isn't entirely shocking. In fact, there's a whole club of 100-year LBM companies affiliated with our magazine. Since 2016, LBM Journal has promoted the LBM Century Club as our salute to the many 100-year-old businesses

we've met over the years. If you haven't seen our roster of Century Club members, I encourage you to check it out at LBMJournal.com/lbm-century-club. There, you'll see a listing and interactive map showing all of the nearly 200 members, the oldest dating back to 1785.

At the website mentioned above, you can also nominate a business for membership in the Century Club. If your company or a company you know of has been around since 1922 or earlier and they're not already on the list, please let us know. We'll handle the rest, which includes getting them the recognition they deserve, such as a certificate of membership, window clings for their store, free admission as guests of honor at the LBM Strategies Conference (this year in Denver Oct. 12-14, learn more at lbmstrategies.com), and a press release to send to local media.

Each member of the LBM Century Club, like Barden Lumber of Boyne City, Michigan, are vital hubs of their communities, with generations working side-by-side contributing to growth and progress. Businesses like that deserve to be celebrated. If you have any questions about the Century Club, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

— James Anderson
Editor



james@LBMJournal.com



RoyOMARTIN
PRESENTS

BOARD CERTIFIED

If a bear falls in the forest, does he make a sound?

Does this question have you stumped? Tune in to RoyOMartin's newest video episode of "Board Certified" to find out. Join host Zach Zimmerman and good pal Otis The Bear for four minutes of fun and frolic while you learn a little bit about the benefits of RoyOMartin OSB in comparison to flexible sheathing.



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YouTube and catch the
latest episode today!



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HOW TO SUPPORT CUSTOMER PROJECTS WITH TRUS JOIST® PARALLAM® PSL



From welcoming great rooms to expansive window walls, home buyers continue to crave open floor plans flooded with light and views. For builders, engineered wood designed to span longer distances can make it easier and more efficient to meet these trends.

Beams, headers, and columns made from Trus Joist Parallam PSL open up a whole new world of design options for the interior of a home. Made with a patented microwave process that bonds together long, thin strands of wood, Parallam PSL is engineered to support heavy loads and span long distances.

Here are details to consider when educating your customers about parallel strand lumber and how it differs from other engineered wood beam options, including laminated veneer lumber (LVL).

Manufactured for Strength

Parallam PSL's parallel-strand construction provides a tremendous amount of strength beyond not only what dimensional lumber can provide, but also more than that of some laminated veneer lumber. This allows Parallam PSL to support heavy loads across long spans. Like other engineered wood products, Parallam PSL is manufactured to resist shrinking, twisting, and bowing.

Simplified Installation

Parallam PSL eliminates the need to pre-assemble individual plies, minimizing bolting and nailing required to create longer spans with other products, such as that required of LVL, thereby simplifying installation for your customers as well as your own sales team. Parallam PSL can also be cut to length on site and fastens with common hardware. Once builders get away from multi-ply products for a single-member product like Parallam PSL, it's hard to go back.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF WEYERHAEUSER NR COMPANY



Ease of Handling

Due to Parallam PSL's high stiffness and wider cross section, it stays straighter on the forklift during maneuvering in the yard. 1¾ LVL tends to bend or droop more on the forklift, which can cause handling issues. Parallam PSL's longer lengths also may mean handling and cutting fewer pieces to fill an order.

Appealing Aesthetics

Parallam PSL's unique parallel-strand construction delivers a beautiful visual when left exposed in interior applications. It can be left as-is or easily sealed and stained on site for added drama and appeal.

Exterior Options

The benefits of Parallam PSL extend to the exterior with Parallam® Plus PSL, which has been pressure-treated with a preservative solution. Parallam Plus PSL is protected against termites and fungi, so it's ideal for exterior, above-grade applications such as deck beams. The treatment penetrates the entire beam, eliminating the need to field treat the beam.

Sustainability

Parallam PSL is built up from strands that can utilize the outer layers of peeled veneer from a log. That process will use approximately 12-15% more of the log than sawmilling or peeling full sheets of veneer. All wood involved in the Parallam PSL manufacturing process is certified under the SFI standard.

Support for Dealers

LBM dealers selling Parallam PSL have a handful of tools at their disposal to assist with designing and selling.

Weyerhaeuser's Territory Managers and Dealer Sales Representatives are a dealer's most valuable resources. Locally based and readily available, Weyerhaeuser representatives call on builders, architects, and dealers to provide product knowledge, sizing calculations, and other design and sales support.

Dealers also can leverage ForteWEB™ Software by Weyerhaeuser, a free software program for sizing joists, beams, posts, and studs, to provide value-added services for customers. The program performs member calculations and identifies solutions for the conditions and geometry you specify. Use it to size members for a specific spacing, depth, or economical fit. In addition, Weyerhaeuser now offers online calculators for sizing Trus Joist LVL and Parallam PSL beams and headers.

Weyerhaeuser Distribution is committed to delivering the reliable, consistent products you can rely on. Connect with your Weyerhaeuser representative today about engineered wood solutions available in your market.





PROVEN RELIABLE PERFORMANCE

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You can trust the strength and reliability of **Parallam® PSL** to create modern, open living spaces and support heavy loads. Build confidently with the unparalleled support of our engineered beams, headers, and columns. Available in long lengths and deep depths, **Parallam® PSL** provides the performance you deserve for a project well done.

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UPDATES

INDUSTRY

Modern Mill's innovative wood alternative product **ACRE** has received a Top Product of the Year Award in the Environment + Energy Leader Awards program.

Trex has ranked sixth on *IndustryWeek* magazine's list of top-performing manufacturers.

LP Building Solutions has awarded more than 50 college scholarships to employees' children.

Cornerstone Building Brands has signed CEO Action for Diversity & Inclusion Commitment in a pledge to advance diversity and inclusion in the workplace. The company also has named country music artist **Tyler Hubbard** its Home for Good celebrity ambassador.

Simpson Strong-Tie has donated \$15,000 to Kentucky flood recovery efforts. The company has also awarded 100 student scholarships to children of employees.

ASSOCIATIONS

Peyton Ritter, president of **Ritter Lumber Company** in Nederland, Texas, has been elected as president of the **Lumbermen's Association of Texas** Board of Directors. **Chris Rivers**, president at **Parker's Building Supply**, and **Cason Shrode** CEO at **Cassity Jones Building Materials**, have joined LAT's Executive Committee as second vice president and sergeant at arms.

In an email to members, the **National Lumber and Building Material Dealers Association** reports that the U.S. Department of Commerce is lowering duties on many Canadian softwood lumber imports to 8.59%, finalizing its third annual administrative review of the controversial tariffs.

CO-OPS & BUYER'S GROUPS

LMC dealers raised more than \$40,000 for six charities across the country, as well as an international contribution for humanitarian efforts in Ukraine.

MERGERS & ACQUISITIONS

Western Forest Products has entered into an agreement to acquire certain assets of **Calvert Company** for \$12 million.

SRS Distribution has acquired **De Bel Roofing Supply** in California.

ODL has acquired Canadian insulated-glass manufacturer **Robover**.

PEOPLE

Natalie Monroe has joined **RoyOMartin's** executive leadership team as vice president of environmental, safety, and sustainability operations.

MFM Building Products has hired **Jeffrey Foster** as the company's new human resource and safety manager.

Chief Human Capital Officer **Sue Lords** has retired from **Kodiak Building Partners**.

Jeff Cook has rejoined **Building Industry Partners** as an operating partner.

Mike Catalina has joined **Russin's** sales team.

Stacey Mecca is a new human resources generalist and **Kris Morek** the East Midwest regional sales associate at **MAX USA**.

Gary S. Michel has resigned as chair and CEO at **Jeld-Wen**. **Kevin C. Lilly**, executive vice president and chief information officer, is now interim CEO.

TAMKO has promoted **Jeff Beyer** to COO and has hired **Prithvi Gandhi** as CFO.

DISTRIBUTION

Dakota Premium Hardwoods will distribute the full line of **Black Label's** sustainable tropical hardwoods.

Britton Lumber will distribute **Armadillo** and **TurboClip** from **Avon Plastics**.



NATALIE MONROE



JEFFREY FOSTER



SUE LORDS



JEFF COOK



MIKE CATALINA

Send news and updates about your organization to James@LBMJournal.com

BUILDER CONFIDENCE FALLS FOR EIGHTH STRAIGHT MONTH

Builder confidence fell for the eighth straight month in August as elevated interest rates, ongoing supply chain problems, and high home prices continue to exacerbate housing affordability challenges. In another sign that a declining housing market has failed to bottom out, builder confidence in the market for newly built single-family homes fell six points in August to 49, marking the first time since May 2020 that the index fell below the key break-even measure of 50, according to the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB)/Wells Fargo Housing Market Index (HMI).

Roughly one in five (19%) home builders in the HMI survey reported reducing prices in the past month to increase sales or limit cancellations. The median price reduction was 5% for those reporting using such incentives. Meanwhile, 69% of builders reported higher interest rates as the reason behind falling housing demand, the top impact cited in the survey.

All three HMI components posted declines in August and each fell to their lowest level since May 2020. Current sales conditions dropped seven points to 57, sales expectations in the next six months declined two points to 47, and traffic of prospective buyers fell five points to 32.

Looking at the three-month moving averages for regional HMI scores, the Northeast fell nine points to 56, the Midwest dropped three points to 49, the South fell seven points to 63, and the West posted an 11-point decline to 51.

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JULY HOUSING STARTS FALL 9.6%

A decline in single-family housing starts is another indicator that the housing slowdown is showing no signs of abating, says the National Association of Home Builders. Rising construction costs, elevated mortgage rates, and supply chain disruptions continue to act as a drag on the market.

Overall housing starts fell 9.6% to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 1.45 million units in July, according to a report from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the U.S. Census Bureau. The July reading of 1.45 million starts is the number of housing units builders would begin if development kept this pace for the next 12 months.

Single-family starts decreased 10.1% to a 916,000 seasonally adjusted annual rate and are down 2.1% on a year-to-date basis. This is the lowest reading for single-family home building since June 2020. More declines lie ahead, as single-family permits decreased 4.3% to a 928,000 unit rate and are down 5.9% on a year-to-date basis. NAHB is forecasting 2022 to be the first year since 2011 to record an annual decline in single-family home building.

UPCOMING EVENTS

OCT 12-14 LBM STRATEGIES CONFERENCE
Denver, CO | lbmstrategies.com

OCT 12-14 LMC EXPO 2022
Philadelphia, PA | lmc.net

OCT 19-21 WCLBMA ANNUAL CONVENTION
San Diego, CA | lumberassociation.org

NOV 01-03 INDUSTRIALIZED WOOD-BASED CONSTRUCTION (IWBC) CONFERENCE
San Francisco, CA | getfea.com

NOV 8-10 ECI CONNECT 2022
Aurora, CO | ecisolutions.com

NOV 14-15 EPICOR INSIGHTS
Scottsdale, AZ | epicor.com

JAN 31 – FEB 2, 2023
INTERNATIONAL BUILDER'S SHOW
Las Vegas, NV | buildersshow.com

TOUGH CALL ANSWERS

ANSWERS TO OUR JULY TOUGH CALL SURVEY:

THE BOTTLENECK NAMED BOB

YOUR COMPANY'S FOUNDER AND OWNER REFUSES TO DELEGATE, WHICH HAS STOPPED YOUR COMPANY'S GROWTH DEAD IN ITS TRACKS. HERE'S HOW READERS WOULD HANDLE THIS TOUGH CALL.

SURVEY RESULTS FROM LBMJOURNAL.COM

2.2%

ACCEPT IT. Bottleneck Lumber is Bob's company, to run as he pleases. If your pay is fair and you enjoy the work, then stop waiting for something that's likely never going to happen.

55.6%

DO THE MATH. Identify a couple of tasks Bob could easily delegate that would have a significant impact on your sales or profits. Once he sees the numbers, he'll be open to change.

27.4%

SHOW & SELL. Just do something that he'd normally do and let him see that the world didn't end. Sometimes asking forgiveness works better—and faster—than asking permission.

14.8%

START LOOKING. If working for a growing company is a priority for you, you're at the wrong place. Time to start looking for a company where you won't feel stuck.

**HOUSING AFFORDABILITY FALLS TO LOWEST LEVEL SINCE GREAT RECESSION**

Rising mortgage rates, high inflation, low existing inventory, and elevated home prices contributed to housing affordability falling in the second quarter of 2022 to its lowest point since the Great Recession.

According to the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB)/Wells Fargo Housing Opportunity Index (HOI), just 42.8% of new and existing homes sold between the beginning of April and end of June were affordable to families earning the U.S. median income of \$90,000. This is a sharp drop from the 56.9% of homes sold in the first quarter that were affordable to median-income earners.

"Rising housing costs stemming from increased interest rates, supply chain disruptions that have led to higher prices for building materials, and a persistent lack of construction workers are dramatically affecting home prices," said NAHB Chairman Jerry Konter. "Taming housing costs will ultimately require building more homes, and it will be easier to increase production in more affordable smaller and mid-sized markets that are growing in population and attracting new businesses."

The HOI shows that the national median home price jumped to an all-time high of \$390,000 in the second quarter, surpassing the previous record-high of \$365,000 set in the first quarter. Meanwhile, average mortgage rates soared by 1.47 basis points in the second quarter to 5.33% from an average rate of 3.86% in the first quarter. This is the largest quarterly mortgage rate jump in the history of the HOI series, which dates back to 2012.

CONSTRUCTION INPUT PRICES DECREASE IN JULY, STILL UP 17% FROM A YEAR AGO

Construction input prices decreased 1.8% in July compared to the previous month, according to an Associated Builders and Contractors analysis of U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' Producer Price Index data released today. Nonresidential construction input prices decreased 1.8% for the month as well.

Construction input prices are up 17.4% from a year ago, while nonresidential construction input prices are 17.3% higher. Input prices were down in eight of 11 subcategories on a monthly basis. Prices in all three energy subcategories fell in July, with natural gas prices falling 27.6%, the largest decrease. Unprocessed energy materials prices were down 21.2%, while crude petroleum prices fell 19.1%.

HOUSING SENTIMENT FALLS TO LOWEST LEVEL SINCE 2011

The Fannie Mae Home Purchase Sentiment Index (HPSI) decreased 2.0 points in July to 62.8, its lowest level since 2011 and well below the all-time high set in 2019. Surveyed consumers continue to express pessimism about homebuying conditions, with only 17% of respondents reporting it's a good time to buy a home. Meanwhile, the percentage of consumers believing it's a good time to sell has begun ticking

downward in recent months, falling from 76% in May to 67% in July. Overall, four of the index's six components decreased month over month, including the component associated with home price growth expectations, which has fallen meaningfully over the past few months but remains positive on net. Year over year, the full index is down 13.0 points.

ARA SEES CONTINUED GROWTH IN RENTAL MARKET

Today's economic indicators are mixed and uncertain, but the American Rental Association says all continue to point toward significant growth for equipment rental revenue in the U.S. according to the latest quarterly update of the five-year forecast. The update projects equipment rental revenue, including the construction and general tool segments, to grow 11.2% to nearly reach \$55.9 billion in 2022. ARA expects growth of 6.2% in 2023, 2.5% in 2024, 3.3% in 2025 and 3.7% in 2026, to total more than \$65.1 billion.

"Rental revenue continues to experience significant growth, despite some headwinds in 2022. The longer-term forecast, while showing slower growth than this year, remains bullish. It is generally a good time to be in the equipment rental industry," says Tom Doyle, ARA vice president for program development.

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"The difference in our old pole sheds and our new sheds is the fact that we only have to touch our lumber once. After the first year, our labor quotient went down 35% the same year our sales were up 25%."

Dick Jennings
 Owner & Operator
 Jennings Building Supply & Hardware
 North Carolina

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NAHB NEWS

1.1 MILLION SINGLE-FAMILY STARTS IN 2021

The National Association of Home Builders reports that according to analysis of the Survey of Construction (SOC), new single-family starts expanded at a fast pace in 2021. Nationally, 1,133,145 new single-family units were started in 2021, 14% higher than the units started in 2020. It marked the fastest growth rate since 2013 and the highest count of starts since the Great Recession.

Among all the nine Census divisions, the South Atlantic, West South Central and Mountain Divisions led the way with the most new single-family units started in 2021. These three divisions represent 20 states and Washington, D.C., approximately 41% of the U.S., while the number of new single-family housing starts in these three divisions accounted for more than two thirds of the total new single-family housing starts in 2021.

In addition, single-family units started in the Pacific Division increased to 106,240 in 2021, exceeding 100,000 for the second straight year since the 2008 recession. There were 93,693 new single-family units started in the East North Central Division in 2021. While the Pacific Division accounted for 9% of the total new single-family housing starts, the East North Central Division accounted for 8%. The other four divisions, including East South Central, West North Central, Middle Atlantic and New England, accounted for the remaining 16% of the total new single-family housing starts.

VOLATILE LUMBER PRICES ADD MORE THAN \$14,000 TO NEW HOME CONSTRUCTION

The National Association of Home Builders recently reported that the unstable cost of lumber has added on average more than \$14,000 to newly-built single-family homes.

Citing a recent Department of Housing and Urban Development/U.S. Census Bureau Rental Finance Survey, NAHB says that the \$14,345 cost translates in multifamily construction

BY THE YARD NEWS FROM LUMBERYARDS AROUND THE COUNTRY

Aubuchon Company acquiring Martin's Hardware & Building Supply

Martin and Kathleen Clark, owners and operators of Martin's Hardware & Building Supply with locations in Bristol and Middlebury, Vermont, have agreed to sell their business to the Aubuchon Company. Following the closing this fall, the Aubuchon Company will operate 110 stores in eight states.

US LBM names Steve Short senior vice president of Supply Chain

Short will lead US LBM's building materials sourcing and procurement strategy and supply chain operations.

US LBM acquires Deco Truss of South Florida

Deco Truss is US LBM's fourth acquisition of the year, including Foxworth-Galbraith Lumber Company which closed late this summer.

Iowa's Spahn & Rose acquiring another Georgia lumberyard

Spahn & Rose Lumber Co. has entered into an agreement to purchase Still Lumber, a building materials supplier in Conyers, Georgia. The acquisition complements the company's 2021 purchase of Metro Building Products, based in Marietta, Georgia.

The Building Center, Inc. expands with purchase of Dixie Lumber

The Building Center, Inc. completed the purchase of Dixie Lumber Company, Inc. in Easley South Carolina on July 22. The acquisition provides The Building Center, Inc. with additional access to upstate South Carolina and the fast-growing Greenville market.

SBSI acquires Haywood Builders Supply

Southeast Building Supply Interests (SBSI), a platform company of the building industry-focused private equity investment firm Building Industry Partners, has acquired Haywood Builders Supply in Waynesville, North Carolina. Haywood is SBSI's second location in the greater Asheville area along with Henson Building Supply in Black Mountain, North Carolina.

Mid-Cape Home Centers raises funds for local first responder mental health

Each year, Mid-Cape Home Centers participates in the E.J. Jaxtimer Charter Cup, an annual fundraiser organized to bring together local building industry companies for a friendly competition to raise funds for a local non-profit of their choice. With Mid-Cape's long-time support of local first responders and commitment to the Sean M. Gannon Memorial Fund, they chose to focus specifically on the mental health and wellness of local first responders, raising \$38,311 (and counting).

84 Lumber opens new Detroit location

The company's newest store is in Commerce Charter Township, Michigan, near Detroit. It is 84 Lumber's first location in the state of Michigan.

Tractor Supply commits \$300,000 to conservation

The retailer will invest \$150,000 each in Ducks Unlimited and Trout Unlimited over the next three years.

DEALERS, GOT NEWS?

Send info on your company's new location, anniversary, expansion, local recognition, honors and awards, new hires, promotions, or other news to James@LBMJournal.com.

to \$51 a month more in rent for a new apartment.

NAHB, referencing July 1 Random Lengths prices, says costs have risen to \$29,407 for the softwood lumber products in an average single-family home, and \$10,734 for the products in an average multifamily home. These numbers

represent an increase of \$12,480 (74%) and \$4,795 (81%) in single-family and multifamily builders' softwood lumber costs, respectively.



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THEA DUDLEY
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Pocket Protectors LLC



MATT ELLIS
VP - Talent Management
& Marketing
DW Distribution



JEAN FAHY
LBM Division Manager of
Business Development
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KEVIN HANCOCK
CEO
Hancock Lumber Co.



FABIAN GALEANA
Credit Manager
TAL Holdings LLC



BRADLEY HARTMANN
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Sales Co.



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VP - Organizational
Development
Kodiak Building Partners



JOSH JOHNSON
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Mid-Cape Home Centers



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PROGRAM AGENDA*

10/12 **BONUS EVENT**
LUMBERYARD TOUR OF DIRECT LUMBER AND DOOR
Includes pre-tour breakfast sponsored by UPG and transportation sponsored by ITW Construction and National Association of Home Builders (NAHB). The Tour is open to all attendees—space is limited to first 110 registrants.

BONUS EVENT
WOMEN OF LBM SESSION

DENA CORDOVA-JACK, KATIE BODIFORD, THEA DUDLEY, JEAN FAHY, STEFANIE COUCH
Sponsored by Pennsylvania Lumbermens Mutual. Open to all attendees. Networking break sponsored by Paladin and lunch sponsored by Do it Best.

WELCOME NIGHT COCKTAIL RECEPTION SPONSORED BY G WOOD PRO

10/13 **KICK-OFF KEYNOTE: HUMANS AT WORK**
KEVIN HANCOCK
Award-winning author and sixth-generation LBM dealer Kevin Hancock will discuss both the imperative and the opportunity for companies to elevate their mission by advancing humanity. Humanity, as it turns out, is advanced one human at a time—starting with yourself, then moving to the people right beside you. Kevin will share details that have helped Hancock Lumber earn recognition as a Best Place to Work in Maine for nine consecutive years. Learn how the power of shared leadership drives deep employee engagement and creates genuine separation between you and your competition.

CREATING VALUE...BEYOND THE NUMBERS
STEVE SWINNEY

In this session, Steve Swinney will share his story of getting into the world of building products, and the approach that has helped Kodiak grow into one of the largest companies in the LBM industry. He'll reveal leadership lessons learned from family-owned local businesses that will help you create value, whether your company is a 100-location national dealer, a single location yard, or anywhere in between.

**MAKE YOUR COMPANY A GREAT PLACE TO WORK:
5 STEPS TO A KICK-BUTT WORKPLACE**
MATT ELLIS

Imagine a workplace full of hyper-engaged employees—sharing ideas, creating solutions, and working with friends. Now imagine every applicant has determined such a workplace is the only criteria they care about. In this session, Matt Ellis unveils the steps and tools used to help DW Distribution earn Gallup's Exceptional Workplace Award. You'll leave with practical tips and proven strategies to make your company a great place to work.

SMALL CHANGES/BIG IMPACT: SALES, CREDIT & OPERATIONS-DRIVEN IMPACTS TO CASHFLOW
THEA DUDLEY, MIKE MCDOLE, FABIAN GALEANA, JOSH JOHNSON, TINA BREEN, CRYSTAL PIESCHEL

Think only big changes bring big results? Think again! Thea Dudley and Mike McDole will lead a panel of innovative, established LBM pros from across the U.S. for an interactive discussion of small changes that lead to big impacts. They'll share examples of how seemingly minor tweaks to sales, credit, and operations often punch above their weight—delivering very real results to your company's cashflow.

NAVIGATING SERIOUS BUSINESS DISRUPTIONS
JOHN MARSHALL

In order to respond quickly and decisively to major business disruptions like destructive weather and fires, John Marshall committed to crafting a Crisis Management Plan for Wilson Lumber by the end of 2019. That plan was tested immediately with an unforeseeable global pandemic, supply chain emergencies, and more. Sharing his company's Action Plan for Crisis Management, John will guide you through the steps to create a Crisis Management Plan to help your company navigate serious business disruptions.

THE INSTALLED SALES OPPORTUNITY
ROB WALKER
Faced with interest rates rising and many materials in short supply, LBM dealers looking to grow their sales and margins may want to take a fresh look at installed sales. In this session, Rob Walker will discuss how the installed sales department he launched more than 15 years ago has grown to contribute significantly to Beisser Lumber's bottom line. He will share the benefits that his company has enjoyed, like providing a cushion during slow times. He'll also share practical insights for navigating the challenges they've encountered as their program grew.

HOW TO PROTECT YOUR LIEN RIGHTS & SLASH BAD DEBT
ARIELA WAGNER
Liens and bond claims are critical elements of an LBM company's credit and collection process. Unfortunately, due to poor job information, missed deadlines, or the lack of internal processes, even seasoned construction businesses can lose their rights. While lien laws vary widely from state-by-state, you'll leave this session armed with fundamental, proven-in-the-real-world best practices to help you successfully navigate the process of protecting your lien rights, and to ending bad debt.

**SUCCESSION PLANNING OPTION:
A WORKER-OWNED COOPERATIVE**
JAY WARD
Ownership transitions typically come down to three options: family succession, selling to another company, or employee stock ownership plans. Ward Lumber, a 132-year old company in its fourth-generation of family ownership chose a different path, becoming a worker-owned cooperative. In this presentation, Jay Ward will share why Ward Lumber became a worker-owned co-op, what resources were involved in the ownership transition, and how the co-op is currently managed. Live Q&A will follow.

SELLING YOUR BUSINESS IN INFLATIONARY AND UNCERTAIN TIMES
JOHN D. WAGNER, TED RIEPLE
"What's my company worth now?" That's a question being asked by owners who elected not to sell in the recent flurry of M&A activity. In this session, M&A gurus John Wagner and Ted Rieple will share how acquisition values have cooled somewhat for smaller companies, but there's still an appetite among acquirers for premium companies with strong growth and earnings. They will discuss the multiples of EBITDA being paid today for companies of all sizes, and review how to position for acquisition if you're waiting out this economic cycle.

NETWORKING RECEPTION SPONSORED BY SIMPSON STRONG-TIE

10/14 **SWINGING THE LUMBER: LBM SALES PERFORMANCE METRICS**
BRADLEY HARTMANN, BROCK LACY
For over a century, three metrics dominated the perceived performance and relative value assigned to baseball players: batting average, home runs, and runs batted in. That is, until Moneyball challenged underlying assumptions. The Moneyball mindset is now upon us in lumber and building materials. In this engaging and interactive session, Bradley Hartmann and analytics expert Brock Lacy share insights, models, and tools to advance your understanding of sales performance analytics.

LBM CENTURY CLUB, LBM100, AND LBM DEALERS OF THE YEAR
Join us in celebrating members and new inductees to the LBM Century Club, companies comprising the LBM Journal 100, and the 2022 LBM Dealers of the Year.

HOT TOPIC ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS

*PROGRAM AGENDA SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

Technology provides a path to streamlined processes

A CONVERSATION WITH BROCK EVEN OF SPAHN & ROSE LUMBER



Q:The technology powering today's ERP platforms offers companies more data than ever. How does Spahn & Rose leverage the data from your Epicor software?

A: With 26 Spahn & Rose locations, including the corporate headquarters and distribution center, we utilize the data to create dashboards and reports to help us determine where and when potential issues may arise, as well as find opportunities to streamline processes throughout our company. These processes could be anything from improving pricing and margins or coordinating deliveries. BisTrack allows us to scrub and look for any inconsistencies across our business. By utilizing BisTrack, we don't enter into any decision as a management team without full, data-backed knowledge. With that data and knowledge, we're able to put consistent policies and practices in place, whether that's at one location, or company-wide.

Q:Spahn & Rose is an Iowa-based company with two locations in Georgia. How does Epicor help lessen the distance between locations?

A: Within BisTrack, we have data integrity no matter how far away a location may be from headquarters. This integrity allows us peace of mind to implement consistent processes across all locations. BisTrack allows us to centralize

functions remotely, so that we don't have to create multiple back-office functions at any location or region.

Q:While our industry battles unprecedented supply chain issues, how does Epicor help you maintain accurate inventory counts in real time?

A: We use inventory cycle counting within BisTrack. This function generates reports that allow us to count the items in our system to make sure we're accurate in real time and on a consistent basis. We run weekly cycle count reports, and we have our locations complete cycle counts every week to keep our inventory accurate across facilities. Epicor's cycle counting allows us the capability to look at high-turning items more frequently than low-turning items, ensuring up-to-date inventory counts.

Q:How do Epicor's technology tools help manage margins and navigate pricing issues?

A: Using Epicor means we're able to review inventory based on replacement cost and average cost. We're able to update our pricing weekly based on commodity price fluctuations and manage regional-level pricing based on the needs of those local area markets. We also create margin goals within BisTrack and during the quoting process; we flag areas where there are potential issues to help us review our pricing strategies.

Q:Fleet management is more important than ever as drivers are hard to find. How does your software help you manage your deliveries?

A: We utilize the dispatch and delivery functions at some locations. This feature allows us to more effectively plan routes and make sure our trucks are at capacity so we are more efficient in our deliveries. This also allows us to fully utilize our fleet at these locations to help take the guesswork out of capacity needs. ■

BROCK EVEN IS THE VP, CFO AND TREASURER OF SPAHN & ROSE LUMBER, HEADQUARTERED IN DUBUQUE, IOWA.

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Tantimber from G Wood Pro

Tantimber, a well-established brand of thermally modified wood throughout Europe and other international markets, is quickly developing a strong presence in the U.S. Distributed exclusively by G Wood Pro, Tantimber's products are produced with its latest Thermowood Technology, which refines and modifies wood without harmful chemicals. The result: durable and extremely stable decking and siding engineered to deliver long-term, real-wood performance.

According to G Wood Pro, the Thermowood Technology starts with FSC Certified hardwoods and softwoods, then uses an environmentally friendly process that "cooks" the wood, removing sugars and moisture, thereby strengthening the wood's durability. While all wood will expand as it absorbs moisture and contract as it dries, thermally modified wood absorbs much less moisture than other timber choices and therefore will suffer much less from moisture deformities. Plus, the absence of sugars, which are the natural food sources of mold, bacteria, and insects, Tantimber is said to be much more resistant to rot, decay, and insect infestations, giving it a much longer lifespan.

In addition to being a great insulator due to the unique composition of the wood after modification, Tantimber is available in a variety of different types of hard and softwoods. Ash and Pine are

popular choices, as well as exotic species like Ayos, Iroko, and Tulipwood. It also comes in many cross-section profiles and sizes, to help your clients meet their specific project.

All of G Wood Pro's siding and decking products are non-toxic, eco-friendly and fully recyclable. The wood's initial brown tone naturally weathers over time to a silver-gray patina, if not treated with pigmented and UV-protected wood oil.

"With many building materials still in short-supply and requiring long lead-times, we recently expanded our manufacturing capacity to ensure ready availability and short lead-times," Mehmet Zenginler, Managing Partner of G Wood Pro tells *LBM Journal*. "Plus, since our Tantimber decking and siding products are new to the U.S. market and not available everywhere, it's a great opportunity for dealers and distributors to differentiate themselves with an established, high performance—and high margin—product."

Learn more at gwoodpro.com



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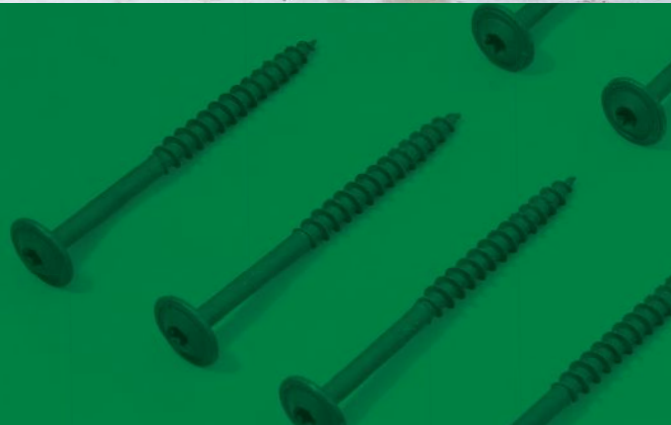


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MADE IN AMERICA



To a large extent, you are who you hang out with

BY BILL LEE

THE TITLE I HAVE given to this article is an old saying I remember from my youth. And remember, “Old sayings don’t often become ‘Old Sayings’ unless they are true.”

The truth is, there is quite a bit of evidence to support the theory that we do, in fact, quite frequently become a lot like the people we hang out with. And whether we realize it or not, we all make the decision who we hang out with. We choose our own friends; no one forces our friends on us.

I remember when I was a teenager that the young people who hung out with friends who broke the rules and got into occasional trouble with the law were among the first to begin smoking cigarettes and drinking beer—almost always modeled that same behavior to others.

When I entered the business world, I noticed a lot of the same tendencies. When my first sales team would attend a national sales meeting, there was always a group of guys (no women salespeople back in those days) who would organize a poker game after dinner, sit up late, usually misbehave in one way or another and crawl into bed in the wee hours of the morning.

Then there was another group who said, “Good night,” left the banquet hall, went to their rooms, called their wives and kids, prepared for the meetings scheduled for the next day, and got a good night’s rest.

Which group would you imagine was made up of the most “heavy hitters” in our organization? Which individuals were usually the first to receive promotions, earn the top sales awards, asked to make a presentation at next year’s sales conference, etc.?

There are likely to be exceptions in just about every organization, but by and large, the top performers spend their spare time differently than the managers and salespeople who focus

on socializing, taking off early to get in nine holes of golf, or whooping it up in a local bar.

Many managers and salespeople struggle to find the keys to success; I believe most of us hit our stride at different points in our careers. But if you are one of those people in your company who are consistently performing below average, I suggest you take a serious look at how you are spending your free time and who you are spending it with.

If your performance is falling short of where you would like, consider this advice: Identify a few superstars, not just in your company, but in your industry, and spend some quality time getting to know these top performers. Be sure to organize this effort. Make a list of a dozen individuals whom you respect, who are super successful and who are not competitors. It helps if you are already acquainted with the people you choose.

Once these targets are identified, give one of them a call each week for twelve weeks. Ask if they will let you buy them lunch. Explain that you want to discuss your industry with them and get some advice based on their experience.

When you sit down with them, take notes when appropriate. Ask questions like—what business books are you reading, what tools do you use to manage your time, how do you go about building a relationship with prospects, what educational tools do you use to keep on the leading edge, etc. When your lunch meeting is over, ask permission to call them for a follow up lunch appointment 60 days out.

Spend as much time as possible with people who are more successful than you are. This is the kind of proactive behavior plan that will enable you to improve your work habits and overcome some of the obstacles to success you are experiencing. ■



Bill Lee is a respected sales and business consultant in the LBM industry. For more information, contact Bill at leeresourcesinc@gmail.com



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Nothing is a commodity

BY RICK DAVIS

THE CHALLENGE faced by many salespeople is their inability to establish tangible value when the product sold is nothing more than a commodity. To that, I respond, “Nothing is a commodity.” The total cost of doing business is greater than the price.

The products you sell are, of course, commodities when they arrive on the rail car or truck to the back of your yard or warehouse. The moment they are unloaded, however, they are no longer commodities...at least in the hands of a capable sales leader. Take the case of Toby, a lumber salesman with years of technical experience under his belt.

At a jobsite with a builder in the process of rehabbing an old house with an extended roof gable, the builder reviewed the list of materials for pricing and presumed that two LVL beams would be needed to complete the job. Toby listened intently to the builder until he was finished. Then he asked why the builder wouldn't just allow him to deliver a 28' LVL to create a continuous structural beam. The builder was surprised and eagerly accepted the offer of a simpler solution.

This is the case of a salesperson utilizing the exact same “commodities” as other salespeople in the market while coming up with a resource to which the builder was previously unaware. This issue of *LBM Journal* highlights features of EWP, an example of our industry taking standard products and creating solutions that are usually simple to you as a lumber expert, while at first being unknown to your buyers.

Toby's story provides an anecdotal example of a salesperson overcoming the commodity mindset yet fails to answer why so many salespeople feel like commodity brokers. The answer to the latter question is simple: Speed.

Speed and urgency are the enemy of profits. These are the tools of negotiation, whether intended or not, of many buyers. They are as pressed for time as are all members of humanity these days. They see the relationship between

buyer and supplier as a quick transaction that is best handled by asking for bids and comparing prices.

Salespeople, with few arrows in their quivers, default to the path of least resistance and accommodate the pressure for “price first and ask questions later” business relationships. Wise sales leaders conversely slow the process down and get all the details prior to pricing a project. They recognize that the products they sell might be commodities, but still require an understanding of engineering applications, lead-time planning, and education for the builder's staff members.

Salespeople, without thinking too forwardly, presume that the builder understands all the specific engineering details of various products. Wise sales leaders recognize that the things they take for granted might be new to a builder responsible for coordinating dozens of products and trades on every project.

Salespeople, without considering the changes that are occurring in our industry above and beyond product developments (for example, technology conveniences to make design and communication more effective) default to old methods of communication. Wise sales leaders introduce technology that enables the builder to work and communicate more efficiently with vendors.

Buyers are not in the habit of training salespeople to do their jobs better. Instead, they will default to the easiest practices that reduce the products you sell to mere commodities. You have the power to deliver value above and beyond the underlying price of the goods you sell. The price is the amount paid by the buyer. The total cost includes the amount of time and energy needed for each step of the process.

Wise salespeople might not have the lowest price while still creating the lowest overall cost, and therefore greatest value. In other words, the products you sell may be commodities, but you're not. ■

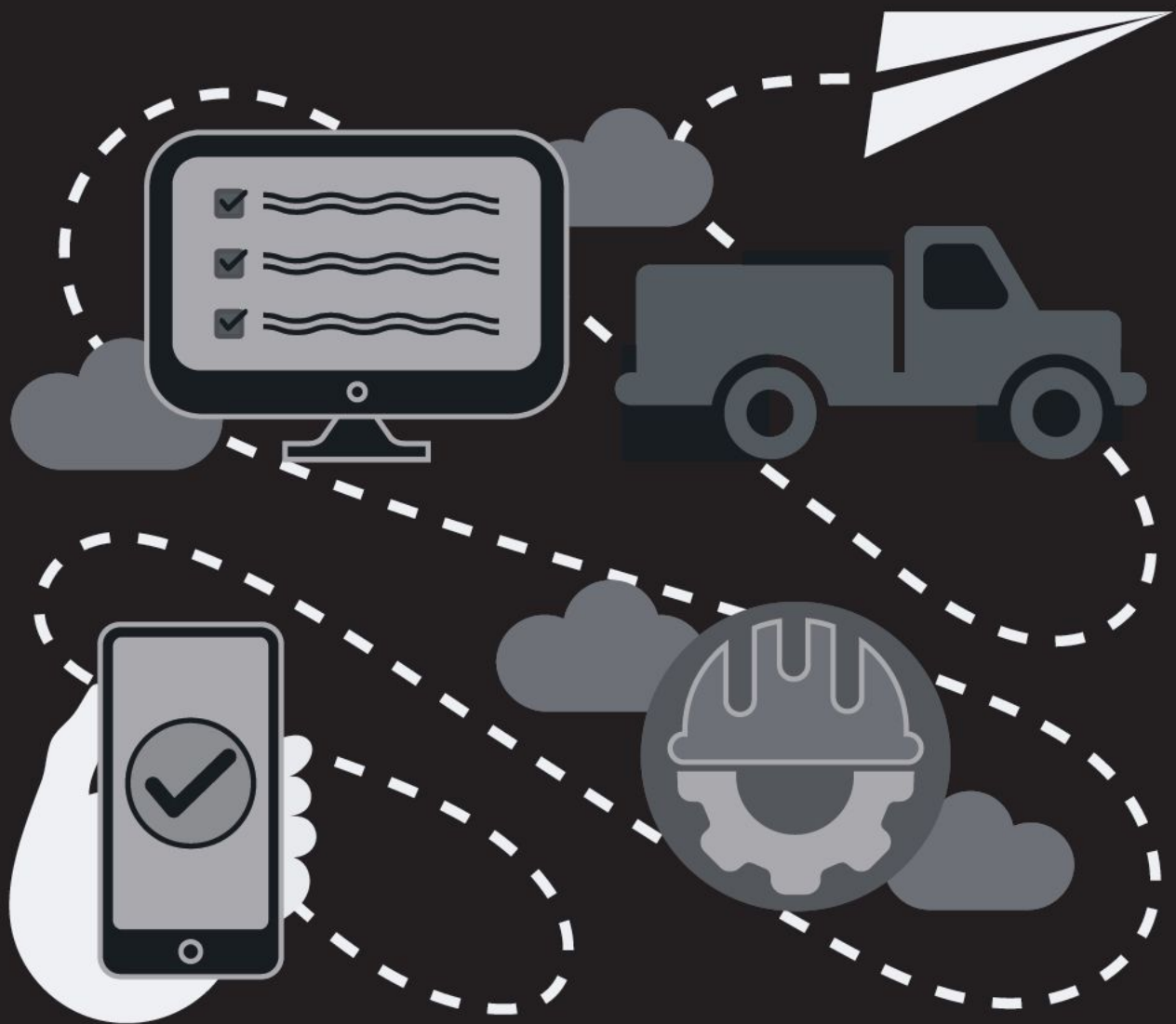


Rick Davis, president of Building Leaders, is a premier sales trainer in the building materials industry. His latest book, *Sales Economics: The Science of Selling*, is now available at buildingleaders.com. Rick can be reached at rickdavis@buildingleaders.com

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Keep things moving.

Best practices for virtual job fairs and college recruiting

BY RIKKA BRANDON

IF YOU WANT TO BE MORE successful filling entry-level positions in your company, effective recruiting at the high school and college level is a must. And it's not something you should just jump right into—preparation is key. On a recent episode of the LBM Journal Recruit + Retain Podcast, I spoke with Joe Misiti, staffing coordinator for American Builders Supply in Florida, about his efforts leveraging virtual job fairs and other tools to connect with younger applicants.

HANDSHAKE

One tool Misiti uses is an online college forum called Handshake (joinhandshake.com) where employers can post job opportunities to specific colleges based on geography, specialty, and more. Students can view openings and submit resumes directly. This is a particularly helpful tool for promoting manager trainee programs.

VIRTUAL JOB FAIRS

Most of us are familiar with in-person job fairs, but since the pandemic, virtual job fairs have become popular and are likely here to stay. Plus, virtual job fairs can help you reach students who may be local to your locations but attend school elsewhere.

Many virtual job fairs operate similarly to in-person events. You have a “booth” where students can learn about job openings, interact with you via chat or video, and submit resumes. Misiti notes that there is a bit of a learning curve and offers these best practices:

Prepare in advance. Just like you would have collateral materials and swag for a tabletop display, you'll need to prep ahead for virtual visits. Set up your virtual booth in advance with a logo, décor, job descriptions, bullet points outlining benefits, and possibly even a short video. And remember that students may not live in the area where they attend school; when Misiti attends a job fair for University in Central Florida near Orlando, for example, he includes job listings for other locations.

In addition to the job descriptions themselves, be prepared to answer questions about those positions. Type out answers to common questions so you can paste them into the chat box quickly.

Work with a partner. Some virtual job fairs allow you to take a candidate into a private room for a video chat; this is a great way to conduct an on-the-spot first-round interview. Having a co-worker with you ensures you're not leaving your virtual table empty while video chatting with an applicant.

Review all resumes. Once the event is over, review resumes that were dropped off but didn't visit. You're bound to find additional candidates worth reaching out to who might not understand the range of jobs lumberyards have to offer.

Check in early. Often, the virtual job fair goes live days before the event, and resumes will start to trickle in. Look for those and review them ahead of time; if you get a great candidate, you may be able to lock in an interview before other companies.

SCHOOL PRESENTATIONS

Misiti notes that the younger crowds aren't going to want to sit through a long PowerPoint presentation. Make it simple, explaining what your company does, its locations, and some of the opportunities.

For high school and trade school visits, bring swag, Misiti advises, with giveaways for all attendees along with some extras to use as prizes for answering questions and such. Tailor your presentation to the vibe of the crowd and don't be afraid to come out of your shell and have a good conversation.

College in-person sessions should be similar—always bring some swag and food. Focus your PowerPoint on manager training and other applicable topics. They'll likely have more specific questions and want to know about pay and benefits. ■

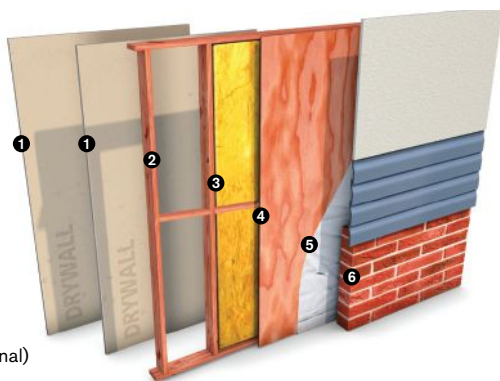


Rikka Brandon is a leading recruiter for the LBM industry. She's the CEO of BuildingGurus.com and founder of RecruitRetainRock.com where she helps business leaders solve their recruiting and retention challenges.

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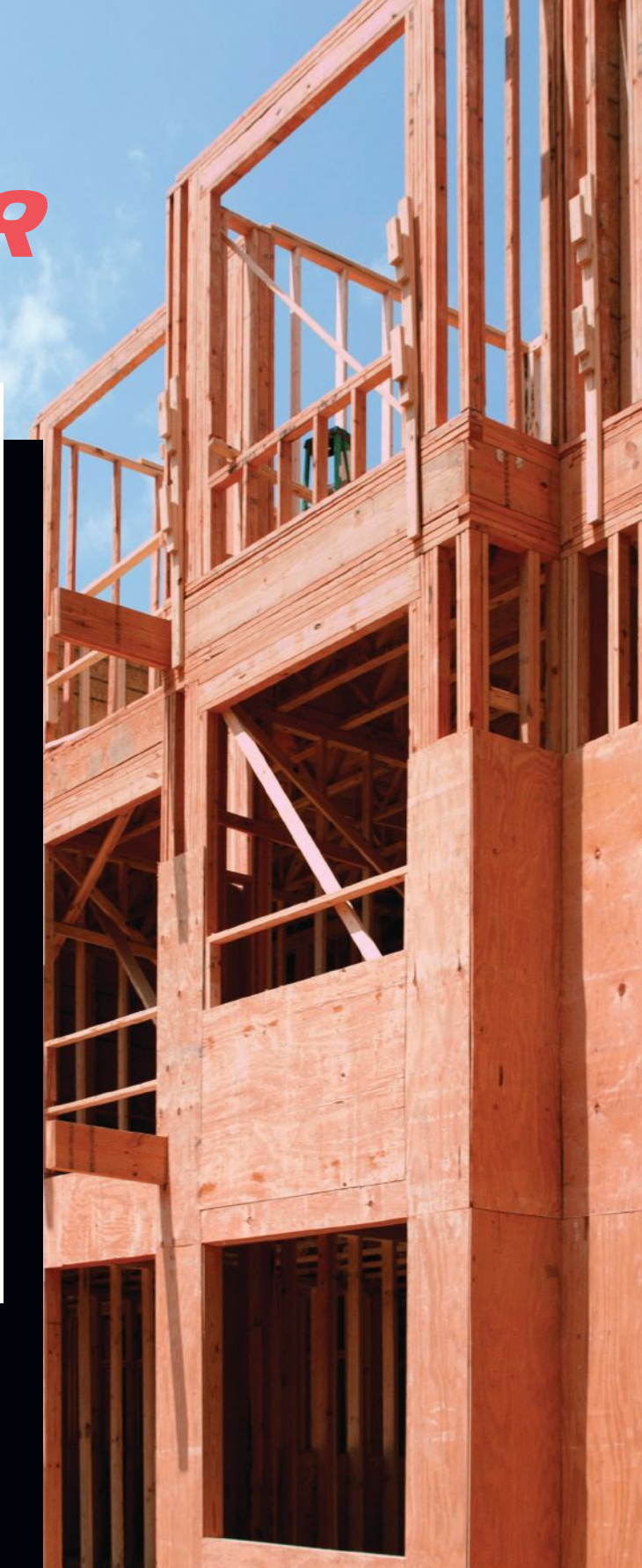
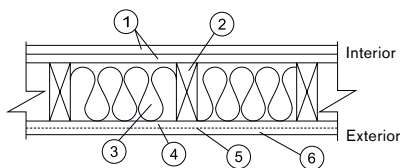
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The art of decruiting

BY RUSS KATHREIN

YEARS AGO, the company I worked for had its HR team going around the country conducting a training exercise in which trainees broke into teams to pretend they were a newly-hired CEO of a company in trouble. Each team's job was to turn the company around by going through a series of rounds that included listening to employee interviews of the imaginary company, looking at data, and then choosing from a list of actions. Afterwards, each team's degree of employee engagement and satisfaction was measured. If your score went up, you were succeeding. If your score went down, you were floundering.

Because this was an HR exercise, the decisions revolved mainly around people. We figured out that the solution was about identifying toxic employees and then determining the right way to ultimately “decruit” them from the organization. If you did it too early, you made the employee a martyr. If you did it too late, they had thoroughly infected the rest of the organization and you could not turn it around.

One of the teams was made up entirely of sales managers from different markets. While the other teams would go down in their scoring after a particular round, they would ultimately figure out what to do to get their score high enough to pass—all except for the team of sales managers. In fact, their score was so bad after two or three rounds, the facilitator reset the exercise for just their team and let them start over, not once, but twice. They failed the exercise each time.

When we sat down with this team and analyzed why they failed in the exercise, it became apparent that the very skill that made them successful was hindering them. They were successful sales professionals who were gifted in the art of persuasion. They also would not take no for an answer. They tackled the exercise with the strategy that they could “fix” the problem employees by sheer force of will and thereby avoid any unpleasant decisions.

While it might be easy to attribute this inability to address a problem head-on to just sales-

people, the reality is this issue affects leaders more than anyone else. How often have we gone into a personnel situation with the intent of saving the challenging employee? The truth is, you can't save everyone. In fact, I've found that when I go into a new organization that needs improving, I can count on losing about 25% of the leadership team at all levels. Some leave on their own, some decide to step down from leadership, and some, need to be decruited.

I was once asked to take over a region for a company that had been on its own for many years before being acquired. The marketing manager had been leading his team independently for 20-plus years, and suddenly he was now supposed to work and coordinate with our corporate marketing team. He was good at what he did, but his go-forward solution was to dig in his heels and fight everything. It got to the point that everyone involved was miserable working with each other, so I called him in to talk. I pointed out that he seemed miserable in his job, to which he agreed. I asked him what he was going to do about it, and he told me he had no idea. I told him that it was ridiculous to stay in a job he hated and we worked out a plan that allowed him to exit gracefully while giving him some security as he looked for something else.

About a year later, I ran into him. I expected the cold shoulder, but instead he told me he had found a job in marketing for an area manufacturer and was happier than he had ever been. He then thanked me for forcing his hand and allowing him the opportunity to make positive changes in his life. I am not saying that all decruitment situations end up this way, but more often than not they can, especially when an employee is miserable but afraid to make a change.

The book “Good to Great” by Jim Collins has an often quoted phrase about getting the right people on the bus in the right seats. It is just as important to get the wrong people off your bus and give them the opportunity to get onto another bus that is right for them. ■



Russ Kathrein is with the LBM Division of Do it Best Corp. based in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

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Should you pass along credit card fees to customers?

BY THEA DUDLEY

Dear Thea,
Our company is exploring the idea of passing on credit card fees to our customers. The fees are impacting our profits and seem to be increasing with more customers choosing to pay that way. Any words of wisdom on how to roll something like this out to customers?

— Passing the buck in Pasadena

Dear Buck Passer:

When I got married, the question I heard constantly was “when are you going to have kids?” We wanted to wait—wait until we bought a house, until our careers were settled, until the perfect time. There was always a reason to wait. My Dad told me, “There is no perfect time, if you wait for that you will never have kids.” Credit card fees are like that. If you wait until the perfect time to pass on those fees, you will never do it.

The hardest part of rolling out a pay-for-play program is making the decision. Everyone in your company has an opinion. Some agree, some are certain all is lost, and customers will leave you faster than a toupee in a hurricane. Some in your company will flip flop between the two, never fully committing to either. However, once the decision is made, you move forward.

Let’s talk details. How are you planning to roll this biscuit out, both internally and externally? What is the fee structure? Are you charging a flat fee or passing on a percentage? Who is facilitating the charge? Is it only on your payment portal? Are you able to utilize your payment processor to handle the calculations and pass on the fees? What about compliance? Does your state (or states you do business in) allow you to pass on fees? There are rules. You

can’t pull a figure out of the woodpile, and you can’t play favorites. In other words, if one account gets a fee, all card payers get a fee.

Once you have those questions answered you have a few more items to address before you can get this show on the road. You have to let customers know before they pay with a credit card that there is a fee, no springing it on someone as they are giving you that card. Notice, inclusion on your invoices, credit application, or on your payment portal is required.

Then come the conversations. Lots of conversations, both within your company and with customers. Be prepared to hear everyone’s view on the new policy. Everyone understands that credit card fees take a bite out of profit, everyone accepts it as part of life, and it gets chalked up to “cost of doing business,” until the “cost of doing business” boomerangs back to them. Then it is unacceptable and outrageous. “Suck it up,” they say. “This is the cost of doing business. Why am I, the customer, penalized for choosing the way I want to pay?”

Sometimes silence is the better part of valor. Let the rant happen, listen, show some empathy. “I understand” goes a long way. Offer alternatives, like ACH. Most people want to be heard, grumble for a few minutes, then use their cards (the most common response to using an alternative payment method is, “but I really want my points”). Yeah, me too, but someone is paying for those frequent flyer miles.

You may lose some customers, some will come back, a few will hold the indignation. You made the decision and like most change, it is met with resistance but before long it becomes part of your business landscape. As with almost everything in life, there is no perfect time. ■



With more than 30 years of credit management experience in the LBM industry, Thea Dudley consults with companies on a wide range of credit and financial management issues. Contact Thea at theadudley@charter.net



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Selling into an inflationary market

BY JOHN WAGNER

WELL, WE CAN'T SAY we didn't see it coming. Inflation is here, and it's likely to get worse before it gets better. This will have two effects on deal making: 1) With inflation, acquirers will demonstrate more caution when committing capital. Until now, the LBM M&A market had been more or less in equilibrium between buyers and sellers. But it has swung *oh so slightly* to be a buyer's market. When pricing deals, we are hearing phrases like this: "We would have paid slightly more, but with inflation, the future is cloudier than even a few months ago." And 2) inflation will impact how buyers finance deals, and how an acquirer's cash is balanced with senior and subordinate debt to assemble the funds needed to close the deal. That's because money is more expensive to borrow.

For deal values in the \$10 million—\$25 million range, in 2022 YTD, as inflation hit 8.6% and interest rates increased on senior debt—less senior debt was used to pay for acquisitions (37.4% of the deal value vs. 54% in 2021), while more sub debt was used (12.1% vs. 10.4% in 2021). This means that more equity (acquirer's cash) was required, (50.5% vs. 35.6% in 2021). Deals in 2022 are simply getting more expensive to fund with less senior debt, more costly sub debt, and more equity needed to bridge the funding gaps. This is even true for so-called "all-cash" acquirers. Even if an acquirer offers "all cash" at close—an attractive feature that makes the acquirer stand out among bidders—the "all-cash buyer" is probably bundling up multiple deals and financing them later on. (This is just like when you bid all cash for a house, only to leverage the asset later with some debt.)

With private equity groups using more of their own cash to close the deal, they still depend on debt to 1) Lower their cash-risk profile, since the debt payments for the deal-specific loans are invested by the acquired company going forward; those debt payments are not paid by the private equity group out of their checking account. And 2) The private equity group's own success is gauged by the return on their

committed capital. Ergo, the more debt they put in place, the less cash they use, and the better they look in the debt-to-cash deal profile. This also means that the private equity group earns back their at-risk cash as quickly as possible.

Where does that leave us today? Private equity groups, which do most of the buying of today's LBM companies—and even cross-town strategics that are making acquisition bids—are 1) Being slightly more prudent in their selection of target companies, seeking companies with higher EBITDAs (\$2 million+), focusing on top performers with relatively high EBITDA margins (10% or greater), and companies that are showing strong Y/O/Y growth (10%+). And 2) They are paying slightly less for them. Not a lot less. But less. Whereas a 5X was a fairly dependable multiple of EBITDA to expect in a typical deal, we are now seeing some slippage of that multiple, especially for smaller companies (sub \$15mm in sales). Offers are coming in that are 4.8X, or 4.5X for companies with EBITDAs under, say, \$2mm.

Here are the purchase-price implications of that downturn in multiples. A company with a \$2mm EBITDA that would have achieved \$10mm in purchase price in a 5X market (5X \$2mm) may now get \$9.6mm (4.8X \$2mm). The EBITDA multiplier that rewarded you on the way up in a seller's market is punishing in a buyer's market.

All of this could be largely cured if the interest rates ticked down, even a little bit, to signal a downward trend instead of an upward trend. That said, private equity groups have a mandate to put their money to work and deals will surely get done; they get done in any market, under every condition. Quality, premium performers with trailing-twelve-month EBITDA margins and revenue growth of 10% or greater will still command excellent interest and premium valuations. And as always happens, we will cycle out of a down market and use the lessons learned to grow even more valuable companies in the future. ■



John Wagner is a managing director at 1stWest Mergers & Acquisitions, which offers a specialty practice in the LBM sector. Reach John at j.wagner@1stwestma.com

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Clint Darnell has decades of experience in design and construction, including pre-engineered buildings, rack-supported buildings, and racking systems in the building material industry throughout the United States and Canada. Darnell manages national accounts from initial design through project completion. His primary goal is providing the highest level of customer service while delivering projects that are consistently on budget and on time. He and his brother purchased the company in 2008, and he has been the vice president ever since. Darnell is a graduate of the University of Georgia and a licensed contractor in a number of states.

Q: With a continued need for housing and remodeling in most markets, what do you see as the biggest challenge facing LBM dealers?

A: Balancing inventory vs. supply chain issues. While this has been getting better, certain inventory items such as windows and doors still have long lead times. Engineered wood was also experiencing delays, but that has also been getting better.

As a result of these long lead times, dealers were sometimes taking whatever they could get—taking more inventory than needed on certain products that they would then have to hold on to in their yards for an extended period of time.

Q: The flipside of that question: What do you see as the biggest opportunity?

A: The dealers that adapted and reacted quickly to the changing market conditions to better meet customer needs are benefiting.

The dealers that have strong relationships with their builders and suppliers were able to limit the negative impact of supply chain issues. On the supply side, the dealers that had long term relationships with their suppliers were prioritized and had inventory shipped when it was available.

Q: As lumber and building material dealers are continually finding ways to do more with fewer team members, how can CT Darnell/Sunbelt products help boost efficiencies?

A: That's our entire mission and goal at CT Darnell/Sunbelt. We develop solutions for each specific situation. When we design or remodel a lumberyard, we always strive to eliminate waste, make the labor more efficient and safer and create a better customer experience.

Products like our Power Bin systems, portable millwork racks and rack supported storage buildings make products easier and safer to move and access. These help save on labor costs, waste, space and improve work conditions for the yard while creating a better customer experience. That's what we've done for companies like Zuern Building Products and Design Center (focus on millwork racks), Ganahl Lumber, and McCoy's Building Supply.

Q: Materials handling and storage systems seem to be an area in which many dealers only consider when building new facilities. How can CT Darnell/Sunbelt benefit current yard storage?

A: We do much more work on existing facilities vs. green fields. Green fields are easier to build on vs. existing facilities.

With an existing location, you're dealing with all its existing conditions, whether it's existing property lines, grade issues, restrictions from the city, or restrictions on setbacks. Each project has its own set of challenges, but since we've worked on over 1,250 lumberyards nationwide, chances are we've come across at least once any challenge a dealer may have.

Q: CT Darnell/Sunbelt's business has evolved to offer more than just storage solutions. How has your role as a general contractor aided the LBM community?

A: We've always integrated storage solutions, but of course, as a general contractor, we can control more of the project. I think it makes clients more comfortable to deal with one company for everything. ■

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REAL ISSUES. REAL ANSWERS.

RECRUITING OUTSIDE THE BOX

BY LBM JOURNAL READERS

SOMEHOW, the chronic shortage of workers seems to be getting worse, with many dealers reporting that it's harder than ever to attract, hire, and retain good people. This month's Real Issue survey question comes from a dealer who realizes that what they're doing to bring on new people just isn't working, and they need to do something different if they want different results. This dealer asked for suggestions and insights from dealers who have experience with outside-the-box recruiting strategies, including hiring "returning citizens"—people convicted of felonies who've served their time.

More than 200 LBM Journal readers responded to this month's brief Real Issues survey. Of those, more than 60% were from lumberyards and building material dealers. Since the question asked about hiring people who'd served time in prison, we first wanted to know how many companies hire people with either misdemeanor or felony convictions. As the chart on the opposite page indicates, just over 68% of respondents' companies hire people with misdemeanors. Of those, 34% also hire people with felony records.

Next, we asked readers to advise the dealer who wrote in asking for help. How would you advise this LBM dealer from the Central U.S.?

“Like so many dealers, we’re chronically understaffed, and even though we’ve raised our starting wages to be competitive in our market, we’ve really been struggling to attract candidates. Since what we’re doing isn’t working, we’ve come to the realization that we need to get creative and venture beyond our comfort zone. I know that some companies have had success hiring ‘returning citizens’—people convicted of felonies who have served their time. We’d love to learn insights from any dealers who are doing (or have tried) this in case we go that route. Plus, we would love to hear about any other outside-the-box methods that dealers are using to bring good people on board. All suggestions are welcome and appreciated!”

RESPONSES FROM LUMBERYARDS, BUILDING MATERIAL DEALERS, SPECIALTY DEALERS, AND DISTRIBUTORS:

“This would certainly be a case-by-case thing for me. There may be some crimes which would be difficult to overcome, yet others that may be acceptable. It would also depend on the position I’m hiring for and the impact an individual could potentially have on the business. I’d certainly want a real understanding of the individual’s desire to re-enter the world of employment.”

“We have had very positive experiences hiring ‘returning citizens.’ They have been extremely appreciative to be given an opportunity to become a contributing member of society. We do make sure what the crime was. Violent offenders are not high on our list, but we will take a look. They have paid their debt to society and with no ability to get a job, recidivism is almost a sure thing.”

“We started working with a recruiting company that’s very aggressive and persistent with how they search for candidates. We are paying about \$1,000 per month as a retainer plus a fee once we hire a candidate they find, but we’ve had amazing success so far. We’ve hired people that we could never have found on our own with social media posts, word of mouth, etc. Also, we’ve recently been introduced to a regional program that connects us with vets, retiring military, and their spouses.”

“We do background checks on all new hires. There are definite crimes that will immediately disqualify someone, but we don’t make decisions until we see official reports.”

“We’re looking for computer savvy employees and we will work on teaching them the industry.”

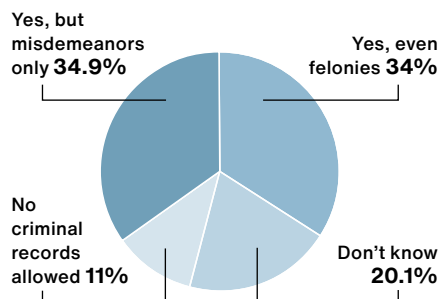
“We have been using temp agencies for more of our hiring and seeing if things work out short term (three months) to see if we should continue long term. I’m sure we give the temp agencies parameters on the background check, but what exceptions do we make for a great employee? We’ve also found that no one is applying for a job unless they know someone who works here. Oddly enough, the temp agencies seem to have a steady stream of people. The newer work force appears to not want to look for employment and are okay with an agency finding work for them.”

“Increase of wages and quarterly bonus payouts based on conversion costs have helped keep our existing yard employees. We offer time-of-service payouts, we don’t micromanage, and sales bonuses all are keeping our office staff in place. As far as getting new employees, we pay bonuses, offer great benefits, and it doesn’t seem to make much of a difference. There just are not enough people looking for work in our area. With a lot of jobs available, I think people have a lot of choices. So just like in sales, the best thing to do is keep the people you have happy, and plan to stay lean.”

“We only hire misdemeanor criminals.”

“How do we connect with all of the displaced Ukrainians? They need help, and we need help.”

WOULD YOUR COMPANY CONSIDER HIRING CANDIDATES WHO HAVE A CRIMINAL RECORD?



“Most of us get caught up into the world of digital recruiting. We rely on Indeed, Facebook, etc. to convey our grass roots needs. This industry is grass roots to the core. Many people in need of employees forget that there are a lot of Blue Collar Bobs out there that are faithfully working that 7-3:30 gig and know nothing of the opportunity that could exist just around the corner. Much of our industry can pay \$40-50K in year one to a greenhorn that will simply show up and be a sponge and learn the processes and materials. Furthermore, with a little fortitude from that individual, they could be working towards a six-figure career in no time. All of this without a single bit of advanced education! This industry is unique in so many facets; once you learn it you can thrive from the benefits. Finding that pocket of people is the trick—that 35-50-year-old systematic worker who is not overachieving and might just want a little bit more in life.”

“What does it say about someone who is not willing to offer second chances?”

“We work and live in area that has had a population explosion over the last five years. It has made it really difficult to hire anyone who doesn’t already live in the area due to a major housing shortage. We are now working with property managers to try to supply housing for candidates, and are thinking about offering hiring bonuses. Another solution we’ve talked about is paying an outside hiring manager to help us find quality candidates.”

“My two hardest working, most dependable yard guys both have felonies and served time. They are always on time, never call off, and genuinely care about what they do each day. When a lot of people told them ‘no’ and we said ‘let’s give it a try,’ it meant a lot to them and you can see it in their effort.”

“I believe it is an owner’s decision based on their need and their trust in choosing the right person. With no experience in hiring convicted felons, I would not be comfortable. It is also important to consider your employees’ level of comfort.”

“We are hiring more part-time staff. We find there are more people willing to work part time. We are even hiring employees that are juniors in high school and working out their schedule when they are seniors and have a lighter school schedule.”

“We have one convicted felon here now, and multiple people from drug halfway houses, with checkered pasts. Some are good, some are bad, but the good ones are good.”

“Look at each candidate as an individual. The days of blanket policies are gone. Just because someone has a checkered past doesn’t mean their future isn’t bright. Trust your gut with people and take a (calculated) risk on someone you feel might be a good fit.”

“We have been more likely to hire someone with a criminal history than we have in the past. We have also done the H2B visa program and are starting to see some success with the process. While it takes time, sticking with it seems like it is going to pay off.”

“Try it. Certainly offer an in-person interview.”

“Reputable addiction rehab programs also provide an opportunity to attract qualified and motivated candidates.”

“The type of criminal offense can certainly preclude us from considering a candidate or returning employee, but there’s often a lot of value in people with a marked background. Additionally, hiring efforts can no longer be passive. Active recruitment is often required now. Start with tapping into your current staff and asking them for referrals and compensating them for new hires who stay 3+ months. Use online tools to seek out potential candidates who work at companies similar to yours or have experience in the roles which you need to fill. Make first contact and have a plan in place to court them that doesn’t just involve more money. First interviews should aim to determine what levers would compel that individual person.”

“I think you need to be careful...a good professional interviewer would probably enhance your success rate.”

“We run criminal background checks on all new hires before extending a final job offer. This gives applicants with a prior conviction a chance to explain the circumstances if they wish to do so. A felony conviction won’t necessarily disqualify them from being hired, but the nature of and circumstances surrounding the felony do inform whether or not the applicant qualifies for a particular position (a finance-related conviction will most likely disqualify someone from being hired in our accounting department). We currently have an excellent employee in a customer service role who was very upfront in disclosing and discussing a prior conviction. Being open and honest and the ability to learn from one’s mistakes and make positive life changes are important qualities in an employee. In another situation, we had a potential hire who did not disclose a felony conviction on his background check authorization, and when a conviction did surface on his record that gave us cause for concern, he chose not to elaborate and instead withdrew his application. This was probably for the best.”

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“Offer an incentive for referrals to current employees, to get some good people to apply. Make it a two-step process: Part up front if a referred person is hired, and the balance after a reasonable time of staying on the job.”

“We partner with a Salvation Army program for substance abuse and a local inmate program that helps reacclimate people to the workforce. So far, we have had good results with both. While we have some people who relapse or don’t work out, most are eager for a second chance and are hard workers. The biggest issue we face with these employees seems to be reliable transportation to and from work. The Salvation Army facility is within walking distance of our largest store, which helps tremendously.

While pay is important and ensuring that your wages are competitive, the most significant factor causing people to leave seems to be a lack of accountability and leadership. Employees don’t leave their jobs. They leave managers. I have worked in the construction industry (industrial, commercial, and residential) on every level, from HR to CEO. Many employees who leave a job say it wasn’t the money but the fact that their managers did not appreciate them, and the harder they worked, the more work they had to do, while lazy workers were not held accountable.

Another complaint is harmful or toxic employees. They are like cancer and will spread their bad attitudes to other employees. The most important thing to remember is employees will only rise to the height you set the bar. Unfortunately, far too many companies put it low and settle for mediocrity. We have started doing more to encourage and provide opportunities for employees to spend time around each other outside of the day-to-day stress of work. This is to help different locations get to know all team members and to help all employees connect in a more relaxed atmosphere. This allows them to offer more grace and acceptance to each other during the workday—for example, an employee-only bowling night. The buzzword for this is Team Building.”

“We struggled for over a year to fill open positions at all levels. We realized our customers were going to be impacted negatively if something didn’t change. We evaluated our wages and adjusted all areas upwards. We began intense Facebook and other social media advertising to put a face on our company and the opportunity for local people to see the value of working close to home and growing with us. We have hired a bank employee, a former office manager of a medical office, and a certified welder looking for steady employment. My dad ran a sawmill for many years and partnered with the state of Florida penal system, which operated a work release program for felons seeking to change their lives. It worked for him. Outside the box sometimes is the place to look.”

“We use the work release program through our local prison system, but nonviolent felonies only. We also found a long-term drug rehab facility that also has a work release program. We’ve found both have worked well, and employees are driven to us and picked up. No more worrying about being late or showing up under the influence. They have good attitudes, as they would rather be here than in the facility. It’s not perfect, some have not made it, but overall, it has been a good out-of-the-box option.”

“In this case, you need to be solutions-orientated. While there can be trepidation in hiring people who have committed a felony, depending on the felony, you should shy away from discriminating based on their past. You have a problem, and there seems to be a solution. Be wise in your vetting, but don’t judge a book by its cover.”

“We have had no success in hiring ‘returning citizens.’ Spreading the word through salespeople that call on us and our competitors has worked in the past for us.”

“Walk carefully in this effort. Paper crimes and theft would lead to questions of trust and integrity. Crimes of violence lead to questions of safety. But everyone makes mistakes and still might be considered for certain jobs.”

“Let’s be real, folks. I have people working for me who are lost in life, have no ambition to improve, just want a paycheck, constantly moan and groan, and are simply a warm body to do no-skill jobs. I would jump at a felon who has paid his debt to society and wants a career helping others while helping themselves.”

“At this time, we will consider hiring ‘returning citizens’ on a case-by-case basis. The type of conviction and job we are filling both have an impact on our evaluation hiring process.”

“No matter the decision, you take ownership as the world we now live in is in turmoil and it is hard to say whom you can trust and not trust. Whether a convicted criminal has truly learned their lesson is not something that can be predicted. For you to employ someone with a history is something that you and only you can determine is right for your business. You may be better off hiring someone with a green card, but again that is sketchy now, too. There is no good answer to any labor force issues.”

“We have modified our previous ‘no felonies considered’ rule in the past several years and have had good success with folks with old, mostly drug-related felonies that seem to have grown up and are anxious to start a new life. We have also recently hired several Afghan refugees and that has been a home run. The language barrier is a challenge but can be overcome. The work ethic has been outstanding from the groups we’ve hired (over 40 in the company).”

“We have hired ‘returning citizens’ in the past with both good and bad results, but mostly positive. We feel that you need to proceed cautiously. Some have paid the price for their mistakes and are eager to move forward. Some have a chip on their shoulder and feel they are entitled. You must make a clear determination during the interview process. Additionally, you need to know the crime that caused the time. For example, a thief should not be a delivery driver but could be okay in the manufacturing facility. Regardless, a returning citizen needs more supervision.” ▶

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“We recently hired someone in our HR department who currently devotes 100% of their time to recruiting for our open positions. They have only been on board for a month, but this move has helped a lot so far.”

“We’ve been recruiting on LinkedIn and Indeed more recently and are having some luck with decent candidates. A lot of retaining comes from the atmosphere. Are people heard/seen? Do they feel welcome as a newbie? Are they able to ask questions? Is there someone who can train them without the long-term employee feeling overwhelmed with their workload while training? Do they see their path of success? Have they caught the company vision and mission early on?”

“Referrals from close people, recruiting heavily at trade shows and local consortiums, and if you haven’t started, recruit heavily at trade schools and high schools.”

“As a department manager I see this happening around me and the suggestion I would put forward to my employer if asked would be: The best offense is a good defense. Make sure you build a good culture, so you don’t lose people and make your staffing shortage worse. What levels / positions are you struggling to hire for? If it’s sales, do you have a good person in your yard who knows products and is good with dealing with customers that you could promote? It might be easier to replace a different position than the one you are struggling to fill.”

“Raise wages even more. The people are the lifeblood of any business. Provide them with a living wage and they will be grateful. In the end, answer the question: Do you care more about the people working at your company, OR the elusive bottom line, that in the end benefits far fewer than having good working conditions? I would also always allow people with non-violent offenses to get hired but have more screening for those that committed violent offenses. Protect the people that make your business what it is, but don’t ostracize those that have made mistakes.”

“It is simple. If you raise your wages to meet the minimum pay, then you were already behind. Once behind then you are playing catch-up. By playing catch-up, you have years of reputation for low pay and very hard work to overcome. Just raising the pay to the meet the minimum in your area alone is not near enough. It can be done, and it is not hard, but it does require some thinking outside of the box. I wonder how the rest of the company is viewed in this scenario.”

RESPONSES FROM WHOLESALE DISTRIBUTORS, MANUFACTURERS, AND SERVICE PROVIDERS:

“Diversity of all sorts, including people convicted of crimes who have done their sentences, improves the workplace. Like every other employee, people with a record need to be managed to ensure a safe and inviting culture. Any person who is unable to contribute to a safe and inviting culture needs to move on to an opportunity somewhere else. Your company needs to be such a good place to work that people won’t leave over a few dollars.”

“We have had success offering people a second chance after serving their time and/or getting clean and sober. Many of these individuals have been with us for many years, and have grown, changed, started families, purchased homes, and are grateful someone gave them a chance to excel. And we are grateful to have them on our team.”

“We’re participating with our local prison and technical college on a re-entry program to hire prisoners. The real problem is the covid relief and healthy stay-at-home program that is still paying rent and mortgages for non-working people, keeping them out of the workforce. They can get cash paying jobs and free rent which disincentivizes them from working. Sad!”

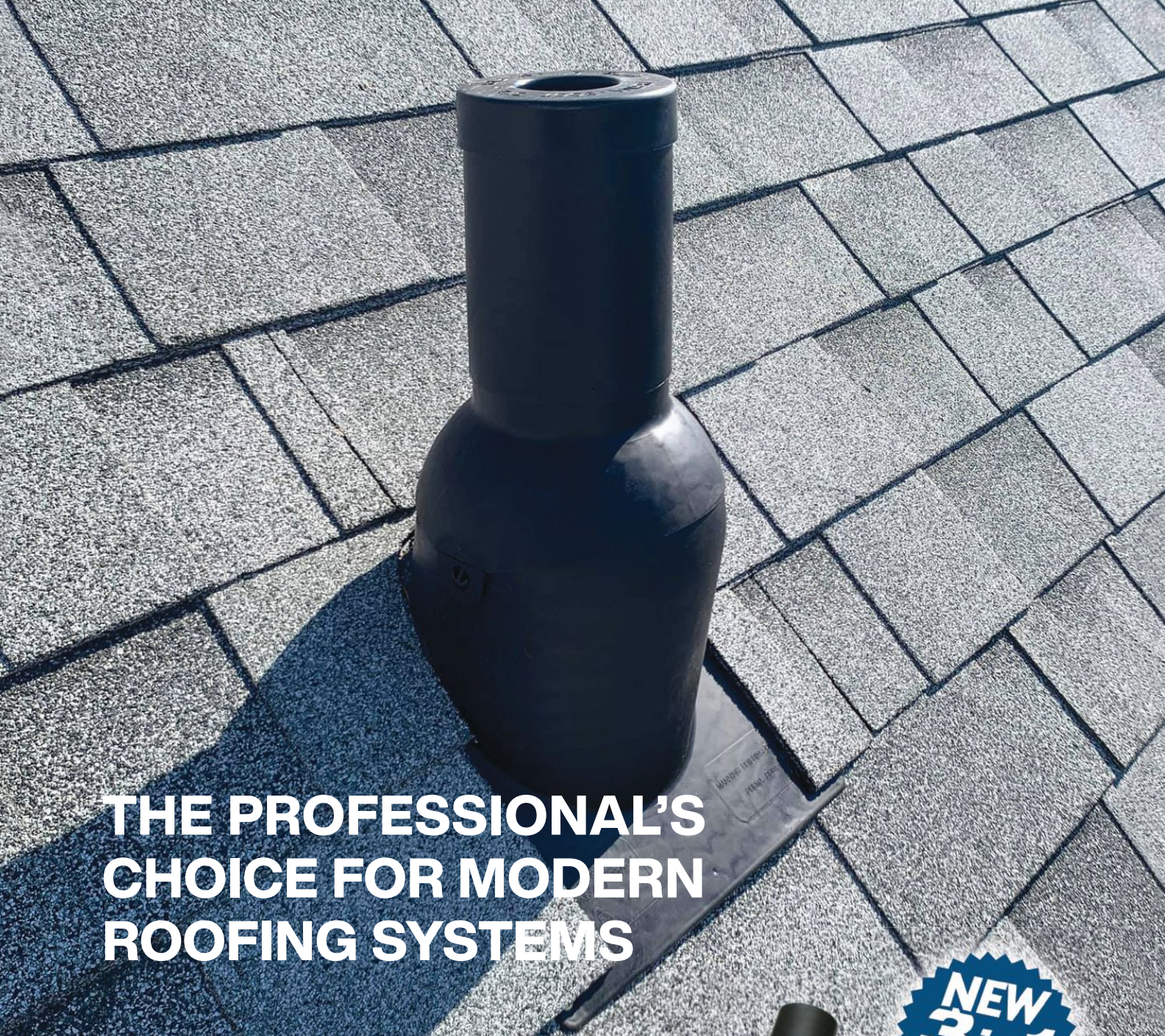
“We all struggle with the positions that are not management or higher pay. Presenting your company as one that treats employees fairly will do more to build your image in a community than gimmicks to attract workers.”

“Use a staffing agency.”

“We continue to have huge successes by partnering with local school districts and hiring part-time interns. Many students in our area have access to work study programs that allow students to work half days during their senior year of high school. Teachers, administrators, and counselors want to see their students succeed; start by showing them all the things our industry has to offer to their students.”

“In the past, I have brought on some workers through the work release program offered by a local corrections facility. This worked out very well for what I required at the time. There were no worries that the individuals would be on time and there were incentives for them to perform at an acceptable level and to stay on as a full-time employee after their sentence was satisfied. If this is an option, I would highly suggest getting more information. As far as those who stayed on after serving their time, the percentage was low. It is for this reason I have some trepidation in regard to hiring ‘returning citizens.’ The time spent training new employees is expensive and we all want people who have the best chance for long term employment.

Why does everyone seem to be looking outside the box? Why not look inside the box? One of the most important things that I have both experienced and observed is that companies that create a positive culture seem to do better at both attracting personnel and keeping them. This is not always easy and relies upon a few very key personnel. Make the work environment fun, yet demanding. Challenge your employees and reward their work ethic. Most importantly, get rid of the negative/complaining employees, even if they may have been there for years or play a crucial role. If you are scared to do this, your challenge of getting and keeping employees will be forever an issue. Attitude is infectious, whether it is good or bad.” ►



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“Know your costs and don’t be afraid to be creative and competitive. Take a close look at culture. Companies with a strong culture have a reputation that precedes them due to the current employment landscape. Bad cultural and employment practices are finally catching up with many employers, as employees now have ample opportunities and are often choosing the employers with the best practices and culture instead of the highest paying salaries.”

“First, look at who is hiring. Sometimes middle managers project an attitude that drives potential candidates away rather than attracting the next rising star.”

“As always, the best source of new employees are referrals from existing ones. We offer a \$1,000 referral bonus to employees if they bring us someone that we end up hiring. We’ve also resorted to hiring recruiters, a practice that we used to avoid. The nice thing about using a recruiter is we can call anyone and claim ignorance if it turns out they contact a good customer, vendor, etc. We are also posting jobs in other areas of the country that are economically harder hit than our own area with hopes of attracting people from out of state. Yes, we will offer a relocation allowance. Truck drivers are impossible to find, so we’ve resorted to outsourcing our delivery services to a 3PL and so far, it’s working pretty well.”

“We did this in the past with some success. Most of our ‘returning citizens’ came through a work release program. While in program, they were very good. Once released and on their own, not so much. Many of our returning citizens’ underlying cause for incarceration was substance abuse which led to breaking and entering or such. We never took on a violent crime case, and no weapon charges. What we found is the substance abuse reared its ugly head later, once they were back on the streets. In hindsight, it might have been beneficial to the returning citizen and us if we required proof of attending AA or NA meetings while in our employment.”

“You give the people limited responsibilities if they were a criminal and as they can prove themselves, they get more responsibilities with better pay. For employees with no criminal baggage, health insurance coverage with employer paying most if not all, as well as some sort of retirement (401k match) to separate your job offer from your competitors.”

“We hire returning felons through a half-way house and have had pretty good results.”

“Don’t risk it.”

“We need bodies to put the product out the door, so we hire people without drug tests and ask them about their history. Most new hires are honest in admitting their crime or jail time and they last if the other employees accept them. Many are happy to get the second chance.”

“With the difficulty of finding help we went to the local temp agency and said we would be willing to look at all applicants, even those with a criminal record, as long as they weren’t pedophiles or wife beaters. The following week we brought in a man in his 30s with a fairly long list of criminal activity. Told him that after his 90-day probation with the temp agency, if he passed a drug test, I would hire him. He has been with me now going on two years and is moving up the pay scale faster than most. Every day I get a thank you for giving him a chance. His outward appearance is somewhat frightening with tattoos, but once I got to know him, he was just lost in the prison system and did most of them for survival.”

“We have hired four ‘returning citizens’ and for the most part they are like any other employee. We had one that has worked out very well, one that was sent back a few months but would rehire them as they were a good worker, and we had two that we let go due to performance issues. We are looking at hiring another. Frankly, they’re on pretty short leashes. Plus, working with your local workforce agency (every county has one), there is quite often grant money available to cover some of the costs to train them.”

“I believe we need to change the thought culture around construction-related careers. We used to be viewed as a great career with a lot of growth opportunity and little college debt to enter the field. The wages had become diminished, and we’ve stopped appealing to the up and coming kids who are graduating from high school. We need to change the mindset that construction is a labor-intensive dead-end job that doesn’t require much skill and is low paying. We need to continue to raise the wages, inform and show the next generations that there is a great deal of opportunity in the construction industry. There are so many ways you can go in construction, and you can enter without debt and can grow into a very fulfilling and financially rewarding career.”

“Everyone deserves a second chance. Also, today’s workers are looking for more flexibility from their employers. This means benefits and expanded vacation time. Today’s employees are all about work / life balance, especially the younger employees. The days of working for just a paycheck are over.”

“I think it is a good idea. It depends on the felony, but, I think in many cases, it could really work well. I disagree with our corporate policy. I don’t think people should have to pay for mistakes for their entire life. Forgiveness is a necessary part of life and people deserve the opportunity to move forward. It is repeat offenders that are a problem.”

“I believe attitude is a key point in interviewing these types of candidates. If the potential candidate has a positive attitude and an attitude of willingness to learn and put him/herself under the authority of supervisors, they can be a good asset.”

“Use significantly higher sign-on bonuses, and also higher referral bonuses to current employees.” ■

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A CENTURY CELEBRATION

BARDEN LUMBER MARKS 100TH ANNIVERSARY

BY JAMES ANDERSON

To hear Paul Barden talk about the celebration of his company's 100th anniversary, one might think he was celebrating the community instead. He wouldn't have it any other way. At an event honoring the lumberyard's centennial, Paul spoke not of the great achievement of his family business, but of the community and the families of employees who have supported Barden Lumber for a century.

The family's single-location Boyne City, Michigan lumberyard was founded in 1922 by F.O. Barden, Paul's great-grandfather. It's no coincidence, Paul says, that a lot of other landmarks and organizations in town, such as the local Rotary club and parks commission, are also celebrating 100 years this year—because of F.O. Barden's love of the area and belief in the community.

FAMILY BUSINESS

Originally named F.O. Barden & Son, the business was founded after F.O. Barden arrived in Boyne City to revitalize a struggling lumber company. F.O.'s oldest son, Russell was involved with the company and took it over when F.O. moved on to work in other lumber mills. When Russell eventually moved on to other businesses, his younger brother, Aldwyn "Al" Barden (Paul's grandfather) took over the company.

By the late 1950s, Paul's father, Ed, had joined the business and some years later, Paul would make his first appearances as a lumberyard kid.

"My entire life I was down here at the lumberyard—from when I could first walk, to later when I'd help shovel snow. In high school my dad would even call to get me out of class to help unload a truck now and then."

After a career in the U.S. Air Force where he met his wife, Yumi, while stationed in Japan, Paul came back to the company with no real certainty that he would find a career there. Mostly, he says, he didn't want something handed to him. But it worked out that there was a position available in 1986, and the rest is his part of Barden Lumber's history.

Eventually, the company's history will be carried on by his daughter, Asuka, who a decade ago returned from a music producing career in South Florida to help at the lumberyard. Like her father before her, she found a career in the family business.

CENTURY CELEBRATION

To acknowledge their 100-year milestone, Barden Lumber threw a party earlier this summer that Paul says was never really about the company. The celebration was to honor the community that has served them. While many businesses point to their years of service with pride—and Barden Lumber certainly does—Paul prefers that the recognition is paid outward. The community of Boyne City and the surrounding area has served his family for 100 years, and for that he is grateful.

"In 100 years, all you have to do is take a look at the events that have taken place—The Great Depression, wars, recessions, a lot of other things. Every one of those influenced the economy in certain ways and still does today. The ups and downs and flexibility that had to take place, that's where community comes in. There were two fires—in 1965 and 1979—which totally leveled the main body of the business. Because of the community, those were just small setbacks." ▶





"WE STAY HUMBLE, AND WE KEEP OUR PRIDE IN CHECK. WITHOUT OUR COMMUNITY, WITHOUT OUR CUSTOMERS, WE'D HAVE NOTHING. WE JUST FEEL STRONGLY ABOUT COMING TO WORK EVERY DAY BECAUSE OF THEM."

— PAUL BARDEN, OWNER/PRESIDENT

Community played a huge role in reestablishing the business after the fires, Paul says, including the one he remembers from 1979. While he recalls the fire and the losses the company sustained, what really stands out is the community helping the Barden family keep the business going so it could rebuild.

“That was unique in the sense that local businesses—some that were generally our competitors—chipped in and helped. They donated inventory, vehicles, lift trucks. There’s something to be said about that type of community.”

That’s why Barden Lumber is an anchor of the Boyne City area and why so many customers and community members attended the celebration, including Do it Best CEO Dan Starr, who presented the Barden family with a plaque honoring their century of service. Also saluting Barden Lumber with plaques and declarations were Governor Gretchen Whitmer, state legislators, and Rep. Jack Bergman who read an official Congressional recognition on the floor of the House of Representatives.

“We just keep touch with who got us to where we are,” Paul says. “We don’t want that arrogance of market share attitude that sets you back in a hurry. We stay humble, and we keep our pride in check. That’s important in a lot of aspects in life. Without our community, without our customers, we’d have nothing. We just feel strongly about coming to work every day because of them.”

SERVING NORTHERN MICHIGAN

Boyne City is a unique area to serve, Paul says, mainly because it’s also a great place to live. Located on Lake Charlevoix, Barden Lumber’s customers are building and remodeling a lot of vacation homes and rentals as well as single-family and multifamily housing. Because of the northern lakes destination, the town’s population of about 3,700 roughly doubles in the summer months.

Barden Lumber handles that boom each year with 12 staff members serving a customer base of 75% professional builders and remodelers. The single-location store with a drive-through lumberyard prides itself on efficiency and customer service. Though with higher-end vacation home customers, there’s also a certain seasonality to working in a Northern Michigan resort area.



“You’ve got to make a pretty good living in five months, and then be frugal enough to spend wisely to get through the time of year when heating bills are high,” Paul says. “As a small, independent yard, we’ve got a lot of smaller builder and remodeler customers.”

“It’s not about us until we serve them. Then we’re able to start taking credit. What sets us apart is the quality and variety of our material.”

The company carries a full line of retail lumber and hardware materials, including many product lines that are no longer carried by the big box stores 15 miles away. If there’s a product any customer can’t find at Barden Lumber, Paul is certain he can locate and order it.

“I always say, if they can put someone on the moon, I can find something for somebody,” Paul says, though he admits that supply chain issues since the COVID-19 pandemic first began have made him search a bit harder.

Barden Lumber is known for their inventory and their ability to source products. That didn’t change much during the pandemic, Paul says. Early on, while China was still struggling to contain the virus, Paul and Asuka thought it might be a good idea to stock up on N95 masks. Set to take a vacation to Japan to visit his wife’s family, Paul decided to cancel the trip and instead start preparing.

“We ended up with about 2,000 N95 masks,” Paul says. And while the supplier at the time questioned why they would want so many, the company donated more than 1,500 of them to elder care facilities, hospitals, and schools.

“At the same time, we were able to help educate people on what it took to get through that initial phase.”

Securing the N95 masks is just one example of the Barden family working together to improve the lives of the community. The company also donates to local school causes, sports programs, veterans’ groups, scouting programs, and much more. Not only in Boyne City, but in surrounding communities as well.

FAMILY TEAM

Paul says as thankful as he is for the community that has helped Barden Lumber succeed over the years, he’s even more thankful for his daughter’s contribution to the company. While neither of them grew up absolutely knowing



GET TO KNOW BARDEN LUMBER

FOUNDED:	1922
OWNERSHIP:	FAMILY
LOCATIONS:	ONE
EMPLOYEES:	12
BUSINESS SOFTWARE:	EPICOR EAGLE
CO-OP/BUYER'S GROUP:	DO IT BEST
TOP THREE BRANDS SOLD BASED ON REVENUE:	DECKORATORS METAL SALES VERSATEX

they'd be leading the company one day, they each held open the opportunity.

For Asuka, Paul says, the return to the company has led Barden Lumber into a more current operating system, as she was critical in implementing Epicor just 10 years ago. Prior to that, the company still used hand-written receipts.

"Business these days is different. She's helped us transition to the new generation."

A focus on technology in serving a younger generation of customer has turned Paul's business philosophies toward the future. "It has changed my thoughts on a lot of things such as remodeling, resetting the store, and so on."

Although no one can predict the future, it is Paul's goal that the family name on the sign outside remain, along with the Barden family's commitment to the community that has given them so much over the years.

"We're the same family, in the same location, for five generations," Paul says. "Our family and the families of our employees, we all show up for this company every day. They take it home and they're vested in this. I try, as much as I can, to give credit to them."

When he was asked to deliver a speech at the company's 100-year celebration, Paul focused on what really kept a business going for 100 years. "Either you're always at work or meetings, and you're always doing something, and if you didn't have loved ones you could rely on to take care of everything else, you just couldn't do it. It's important that we pass that along." ■



To acknowledge their 100-year milestone, Barden Lumber threw a party earlier this summer to celebrate and honor the community that has served them. Do it Best CEO Dan Starr presented Paul Barden with a plaque honoring the company's century of service.

With 12 staff members serving a customer base of 75% professional builders and remodelers, the single-location store with a drive-through lumberyard prides itself on efficiency and customer service.





ENGINEERED WOOD PRODUCTS

IN THE FACE OF UNCERTAIN ECONOMICS, EWP CAN PROVIDE UNIQUE WINS.

BY MIKE BERGER

ENGINEERED WOOD PRODUCTS have helped shape the world for far longer than most of us realize. The ancient Incas, for example, built boats made of interlayered reeds and balsa that they used extensively to ply the waters around South America—and some say all the way to Polynesia—establishing trade routes as they went. Exceptionally buoyant, resilient, and flexible, these watercrafts were used for centuries and became the inspiration for Thor Heyerdahl who, in 1947, built a replica of one of those ancient boats that he named the Kon-Tiki. With five other crew members, Heyerdahl sailed the Kon-Tiki across the Pacific Ocean, ultimately proving the strength of engineered wood construction.

While today's LBM dealers may not have to worry about establishing pan-Pacific trade routes, engineered wood products (or EWP as they're commonly referred to) are an ever-growing product segment that continues yielding significant growth. By understanding the unique nature and benefits of the EWP lineup, distributors can position themselves to be problem-solvers in an otherwise unpredictable building market.

THE PAIN OF GROWTH

After an unprecedented period of growth throughout the pandemic, the building and remodeling market is starting to see a small bit of a slowdown. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, housing starts in the U.S. sank 14.4% month-over-month in May of 2022, due in part to rising inflation and mortgage rates, which when combined with increases in the costs of building materials have hamstrung consumer budgets.

This doesn't mean, however, that there's going to be slowdowns in demand for engineered wood products. As we reported last year, there's a growing willingness on the part of builders and contractors to use alternative materials in place of historically used products—a trend that's now putting a strain on EWP manufacturers. "The EWP industry has been running at full capacity for the past twelve months resulting in very tight supply," says Wendy Minichiello, North America EWP sales director for Weyerhaeuser. "Unfortunately, small in-

cremental growth that comes from mill-level production improvements won't significantly change product availability. Any significant growth would come from new mills coming on-line or existing mills converting to EWP manufacturing."

And those rises in interest rates? Manufacturers are still predicting EWP segment growth over the next 12 months. "While we're seeing interest rates rise and builder sentiment cooling a bit, we're still expecting a strong remainder to 2022 and first half of 2023," explains Parry Healy, senior segment marketing manager at LP Building Solutions. "We're seeing strong demand for remodeling activity, and we're also seeing consumers interested in premium investment products like LP SmartSide Trim & Siding and products in our Structural Solutions portfolio like LP WeatherLogic Air & Water Barrier, which bodes well for engineered lumber."

Chris Reiten, director of EWP sales for Boise Cascade, also sees positives for EWP product demand, as well as opportunities for manufacturing to potentially increase output. "Interest rates will obviously play a huge role throughout the economy potentially placing pressure on the housing market," he points out. "However, we expect to continue to experience a favorable demand, be it in a more normal business environment for Boise Cascade EWP. We look to grow our production capacity going forward to better meet our customer's needs and the demands of the marketplace now and into the future." ▶

OPPOSITE PAGE:

Weyerhaeuser is making mill investments to increase capacity with expected ramp-up in late 2022 of its Parallam Plus product line. According to the manufacturer, Parallam PSL beams add strength and reliability to structures, make longer spans possible, and allow for more design options with open, spacious floor plans.

BELOW: BCI Joists from Boise Cascade are specially constructed I-joists with flanges made from VERSA-LAM laminated veneer lumber with oriented stranded board webs and approved waterproof structural adhesives. They're available in long lengths, are light weight, and come with a lifetime warranty.





According to Boise Cascade, its VERSA-LAM LVL beams and headers eliminate twisting, shrinking and splitting, and deliver flatter, quieter floors and structures. Because they have no camber and strength is consistent throughout, VERSA-LAM LVL products support heavier loads and longer spans than comparable glulam or dimension lumber products.

CHANGING NEEDS DRIVE TRENDS

To understand the growth of the EWP segment, LBM dealers need look no further than the increased priority homeowners are placing on sustainability and resilient design, or in other words, the creation of structures that respond better to natural and manmade disasters as well as long-term climate issues. It’s a trend that EWP is particularly suited for.

As LP’s Healy explains, “Within the walls of LP and during exchanges with customers, we’re seeing an increased interest in sustainability. We’re starting to talk about product needs and attributes that can help enhance the inherent sustainability benefits of LP products. We’re always interested in developing products that can positively impact the challenges our customers are facing. How can we make our products easier to install, transport, store, and maintain? How can we help our builders and remodelers deliver what their customers are asking for?”

Builders and remodelers, too, are seeing the increased consumer demand for resilient products, and LBM dealers need to be prepared to deliver on this trend. “More and more builders prioritize resiliency, building a more durable

home, as pass-through value to their clients,” points out Charlie Robinson, vice president of marketing for Huber Engineered Woods. “Homeowners and buyers are catapulting this trend as they actively research products that represent aesthetics and quality and how they perform long-term. That rings especially true for those living in weather zones vulnerable to natural disasters like coastal hurricane-prone areas.”

Sustainability and resiliency aren’t the only building trends on the rise, however. Tall wood and mass timber construction practices are gaining an increasing foothold here in the U.S., and EWP manufacturers are keenly interested in the growth potential these building methods bring. “Tall wood construction and Mass Timber continue to create a lot of excitement in the industry,” says Weyerhaeuser’s Minichiello. “The energy to build wood-based buildings and strong interest in mass timber is driving us to look deeper into how we can use wood fiber in new ways.”

Mass timber include a number of engineered wood products that typically involve the lamination and compression of multiple layers to create solid panels of wood, including: ▶



Huber’s AdvanTech X-Factor is a new class of premium subflooring with a fade-resistant, water-shedding surface on a high-performance engineered wood panel. It features a built-in protective top layer that, according to Huber, provides a distinctively smooth, even, premium subfloor surface that is marker-friendly and easy to clean, and it offers a Squeak-Free Guarantee when paired with Huber’s AdvanTech subfloor adhesive.

LUMBER PROS:

WHAT YOU'RE MADE OF MATTERS

This isn't a desk job. It's a
get-out-from-behind-the-desk job.

A do-whatever-it-takes job.

Sometimes that means jumping
on the forklift to move material.
Sometimes that means jumping
in the truck to meet the customer
on the jobsite.

But it's always about solving
problems. Usually with a smile
(though sometimes not).

And always with a sense of pride.

Because you keep our
industry moving.

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- Cross-laminated timber (CLT): used for walls, floors, and roofs, CLT is made up of layers of dimensional lumber stacked perpendicular and glued together to create structural panels that are typically three, five, or seven layers thick.
- Nail-laminated timber (NLT): used primarily for floors and roofs, NLT is made by stacking layers of dimensional lumber on end and fastening them together using nails or screws.
- Laminated Strand Lumber (LSL): resembling oriented strandboard in appearance, LSL is made from long strands of fast-growing aspen or poplar where the strands are arranged parallel to the longitudinal axis.
- Parallel Strand Lumber (PSL): typically used for columns, beams, and posts, PSL is formed from parallel wood strands bonded together with adhesive.
- Glue-laminated timber (glulam): commonly used for floors, beams, and columns, glulam is made from stacking dimensional lumber on edge and bonding them together with moisture-resistant adhesives.

Following the IBC’s update in 2021 that allows for mass timber buildings up to 18 stories, the material has become a more popular option in the U.S., primarily for small office and apartment buildings. “Mass timber is poised to take off in the next 12 months,” says Chris Webb, general manager, Canfor Engineered Wood Products. “The Softwood Lumber Board forecast a 3.8 Bfbm (billion board feet) incremental demand opportunity in non-residential construction for mass timber between now and 2035.”

MITIGATING CUSTOMER FEARS

While manufacturers consistently report the willingness of builders to try new products, there remains a level of cautiousness on their part that LBM dealers need to overcome. For



According to LP Building Solutions, its LP NovaCore Thermal Insulated Sheathing is one of the only insulated panel products on the market that combines XPS foam with an oriented strand board (OSB) substrate. It addresses growing code demands by combining built-in energy code compliance features and easier installation for builders thanks to its use of 2x4 spacing that, in many markets, does not require the installer to adjust their framing size.

some builders and contractors, engineered wood products represent somewhat of an unknown, and it takes a bit of handholding on the part of the dealer to walk their customers through the potential EWP benefits.

“Our research has shown that there is still a growing population of builders ready to try new, innovative products,” explains Huber’s Robinson. “However, the risk of change is still a tradeoff, so they respond well to education that helps justify an upgrade when switching from traditional products and methods to newer solutions like integrated sheathing or high-performance subflooring, which provide greater value for the total cost of ownership.”

LP’s Parry Healy agrees, pointing out how dependable technical support can greatly mitigate any fears builders may have when making the switch to EWP. “Our team of technical application specialists and engineers augment local sales team support for installation instruction, design specification and code compliance questions. In addition, our marketing teams provide constant streams of technical tips, videos, virtual education and ‘Meet Ups’ as part of our brand building and loyalty-driving content marketing strategy.”

FAR LEFT: Boise Cascade recently introduced its SawTek Cutter Plus automated saw as an entry level option to its SawTek systems. According to the manufacturer, the saw delivers a cost-effective method for stocking, selling and processing EWP. In addition to product optimization, processing and inventory control tools, SawTek saws can also cut holes and tag each piece with a label that corresponds to the framing plan.

LEFT: Available in a variety of offerings, BlueLinx’s onCENTER Engineered lumber is said to offer builders, designers and developers the flexibility to create almost limitless open floor plans in commercial and residential projects.





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Boise Cascade's Chris Reiten also stresses the value of technical support, using his company's products as examples. "Most builders are familiar with the many benefits BCI and AJS I-joists and Versa-Lam LVL provide," he explains. "We look to take it further by providing additional layers of support, software, and training. There are few items more frustrating to builders than jobsite delays from framing errors. Boise Cascade works closely with our dealers and distributors to provide software, training, and information to help prevent errors before they occur. If an error does occur, we offer an elevated level of support through our recently launched Engineering Support Portal. The portal provides a simple way for customers to submit questions. Internally, it is automatically assigned to the proper engineer to provide a timely response."

SOLUTIONS SAVE THE SALE

While all these growth factors seem positioned to deliver significant returns for the LBM dealer, manufacturers are wary about being able to meet that potential growing demand. Breakdowns in infrastructure, lack of manufacturing manpower, transportation difficulties, and radical changes in fuel prices have all conspired to create an unstable environment for LBM dealers.

"The EWP industry is struggling to meet current housing demand," says Canfor's Webb. "North American LVL is nearing or has reached capacity throughout the industry and is in the mature phase of its product life cycle. North American LSL capacity has been reduced from 25 million ft³ to 13 million ft³ with the recent closure of a plant in Maine."

Weyerhaeuser's Minichiello agrees. "We believe manufacturing will continue to see pressure on transportation, labor, and raw material supply. Short to mid-term, we expect to see continued bumpiness created by the imbalance between demand and supply."

So, in the face of these uncontrollable disruptors, how can the LBM dealer best meet the needs of their customers? Ask Boise Cascade's Reiten, and he'll tell you it's all about customer service.

"Now it's easy to sell out your entire inventory, but this won't last forever," he explains. "Building strong relationships, that's good business. This does not mean always say yes. It means being there, providing solutions, not just the answers they want to hear."

Manufacturers agree upon the importance of providing solutions. Using product knowledge to be able to pivot when a certain product is unavailable or being capable of making recommendations that can speed a customer's job, can be the difference between a long-lasting customer relationship and a single one-time sale.

For example, manufacturers suggest stocking products that can speed installation or can be installed with fewer people. "It's essential for dealers to ensure the products they're stocking are installer-friendly," recommends LP's Healy. "Are they safe to use, easy to carry and pass to a crew member, and simple to install? Ensuring that the needs of the installer are met with the products you're recommending will help make the build process more efficient and enjoyable for everyone involved."

Huber's Charlie Robinson agrees with Healy, noting how offering products from compatible lines can ultimately benefit builders and remodelers. "We find builders value the ease of compatible products under a single manufacturer used in diverse designs and applications," he points out. "For instance, when switching from traditional plywood or OSB sheathing and felt to ZIP System sheathing and tape in roof applications, builders prefer that the sheathing, underlayment, and air barrier are all covered and supported by a single manufacturing source. Similarly, when a combination of products under a single manufacturer comes backed by a higher performance guarantee, it can be a motivating upgrade for builders."

Lastly—and most obviously—manufacturers point out the necessity of product training for LBM dealer staff. "Educate your customers," stresses Canfor's Chris Webb. "Take advantage of manufacturing and industry expertise and offer continuing edu-

cation classes to contractors/framers to educate them on new and existing products that offer solutions to their framing needs. Set up mill tours with manufacturers to learn how products are made and best practices for use."

LP's Healy echoes Webb's thoughts. "Training! When your staff can speak to the features and benefits of the products being stocked, it makes it easier for them to find a good fit for a customer's project and to sell with confidence. It's all about finding what method works best for your team. There are many effective technology solutions for training available today. We find that providing virtual tools in combination with targeted, in-person training is the most effective approach."

To say that the construction market, and the LBM dealer by nature of association, exist in turbulent times is an understatement, and it's a message that's starting to sound like a broken record. Shipping backlogs, lack of manufacturing manpower, raw material shortages, and supply chain disruptions can all conspire to create a volatile environment. EWP, however, stands ready to not only fill in the voids created by these disruptors, but can also give LBM dealers additional solutions builders are desperately looking for.

"It's probably no surprise," says Boise Cascade's Chris Reiten, "that we see labor, logistics and product availability as sticking points continuing. These issues are some of the reasons why we focus on our strategy of supporting our EWP customers' needs. For dealers, they have a key role to play and can invest in technology to improve their position in their markets. By providing an increased level of service such as design services. Both can help a dealer stand out while strengthening builder relationships." And like those ancient Incan boats, EWP can provide the innovation needed to successfully navigate these uncharted waters. ■

Michael Berger is the managing editor for *LBM Journal*, and has been writing about home improvement and construction for well over 20 years.



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Evolve Stone veneer

Evolve Stone’s stone veneer is designed as the world’s first mortarless, color-throughout stone veneer with realistic-stone looks and texture. According to the manufacturer, because Evolve Stone is installed using a nail gun and finish nails, it installs up to 10 times faster than traditional stone veneer—and saves on masonry costs. Evolve Stone is engineered to not hold moisture against a structure, which other veneers can do. Evolve Stone is designed to be durable as well as lightweight, which is said to make installation less cumbersome and easy for homeowners and DIYers. Evolve Stone won Best in Show and Most Innovative Building Material at the 2022 International Builder’s Show. evolvestone.com



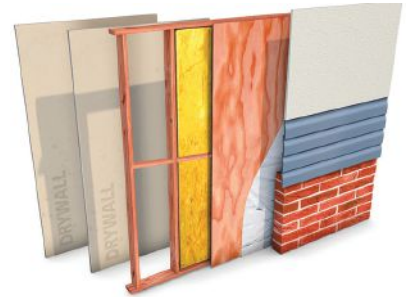
Simpson Strong-Tie’s Strong-Drive screws for mass timber

Simpson Strong-Tie has launched an expanded line of Strong-Drive premium screws designed to provide structural fastening solutions for the construction and repair of mass timber assemblies and structures. The new family of 10-millimeter Strong-Drive mass timber screws includes a selection of countersinking fasteners in fully threaded, partially-threaded, cylinder-head, and flat-head options. Engineered to provide strength across a wide range of designs, Simpson Strong-Tie mass timber fasteners and connectors are ideal for CLT construction. go.strongtie.com/masstimber



ProWood FR Wall Assembly

ProWood recently achieved UL Listing on a fire-retardant, pressure-treated wall assembly, ProWood FR UL V343 2-Hour Wall Assembly. The code-compliant ProWood FR V343 wall assembly bears a Class A Flame Spread Index of 25 or less, the best possible rating awarded to fire-retardant building products. ProWood FR V343 is manufactured under the



independent third-party inspection of Underwriters Laboratories Inc. According to the manufacturer, the UL Listing for ProWood FR’s V343 pressure-treated wall assembly gives builders and architects the peace of mind to spec the product in their construction applications. It also allows building code officials to quickly and confidently approve the product on the job sites. prowoodlumber.com

eCommonSense from ECI

eCommonSense is an industry-specific ecommerce solution developed to provide LBM dealers with an online shopping experience that rivals big box retailers, allowing builders and consumers to research and purchase items at their convenience. eCommonSense is fully integrated with ECI’s ERP and its unified product information management system. ecommonsense.com



Impressions door system from Therma-Tru

The Impressions integrated storm and entry door system from Therma-Tru, in partnership with LARSON, is designed to complement any home’s architectural style while offering added protection against the elements. One integrated system is designed to take the guesswork out of ordering the right size storm door—and make installation a breeze. Homeowners can choose from a variety of Therma-Tru entry door styles, and colors, with or without glass. thermatru.com





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Johnson Hardware pocket door frames

Johnson Hardware's Series 1500SC pocket door frame is the latest model to join its line of heavy-duty, steel split-stud pocket door frames. Engineered for installation in 2x4 walls, the 18-gauge cold-rolled galvanized steel split-studs resist warping and rust. The 1500SC can support solid-core doors between 1" and 1-3/4" thick, and weighing up to 165 lbs. The steel split-stud design is engineered to make the frame more versatile. With its narrower studs, the frame allows an additional 1/4" pocket clearance. The new steel split-studs accommodate a larger 2-1/4" wide pocket. The 1500SC also features Johnson Hardware's soft-open/soft-close mechanism. johnsonhardware.com



TrussBRACE from FastenMaster

FastenMaster has introduced TrussBRACE, engineered to be a faster and safer alternative to temporary wood-based supports used to install roof trusses. The FastenMaster TrussBRACE is a steel roof truss support that provides both lateral and diagonal restraint in one brace. According to the manufacturer, this system allows framers to set, space, and brace roof trusses in one easy step, increasing jobsite safety and productivity. The product is designed to keep framers safe since it is installed from the bottom chord. Productivity is enhanced and waste is minimized by eliminating temporary top chord bracing that must be removed prior to sheathing the roof. fastenmaster.com



Daich Coatings TracSafe Anti-Slip Sealer

TracSafe's Anti-Slip Sealer is formulated with a unique pre-mix to be applied on garage floors, slippery steps, showers, walkways, pool decks, and more. Applied by rolling onto a surface, two coats of Anti-Slip Sealer are said to bring stability and peace of mind to any concrete or tile surface. Users can transform the color of the surface before sealing by first applying TracSafe's Anti-Slip Color Coat. As easy to apply as paint, TracSafe Anti-Slip Color Coat comes in Graphite, Shell Grey, Cream, Clay Brick, and Terracotta colors. daichcoatings.com



The Independence series is also EH rated and features KEEN.Toughsole, an oil- and slip-resistant outsole designed to be lighter weight and more durable than rubber. keenfootwear.com



PowerPro Concrete Screw Anchors

PowerPro Concrete Screw Anchors are code-approved for fastening into concrete and masonry materials. Engineered design cuts threads into concrete, brick, and block. The screws are available in three colors, are recommended for interior and exterior projects, and use a standard ANSI drill bit for installation. Approved for Miami-Dade County, Florida, and California building codes. hillmangroup.com



KEEN Utility's Independence Series

The new Independence series from KEEN Utility features an abrasion-resistant, supple leather upper. Product highlights of this medium-duty boot include a KEEN.DRY waterproof, breathable membrane for dependable dryness, Luftcell midsole infused with nearly 100,000 air bubbles per cubic centimeter, designed for all-day support, and asymmetrical carbon fiber toes which, according to the manufacturer, are 15% lighter than steel.

Superior Plastics 400 Series

The 400 Series from Superior Plastics is a deckboard top rail designed to make a deck even more welcoming as an entertaining space by serving as a drink rail that's also integrated visually into the deck's overall color scheme for a unified appearance. Superior engineered a system in which an aluminum receiver plate is fastened to a simple vinyl top rail. The receiver plate is predrilled every 12", so that the railing installer can simply lay a deckboard on top of it and then, using the supplied fasteners, attach the railing to the aluminum plate. Because the deckboard is fastened every 12" across the entire rail, the manufacturer says there is no gapping and the deckboard is held flush to the top rail. superiorplasticproducts.com



SPAX PowerTrim finishing and composite-PVC trim screws

The new SPAX specialty fastener is designed for use in attaching wood and composite/PVC trim boards for residential home interior and exterior work. Partial thread applications include window and door casing attachment, base-boards, cabinetry, door jambs, stairs and railings, crown molding, and fine carpentry. Reverse double thread applications include fascia trim, baseboards, window and door trim, and countertop trim. PowerTrim fasteners include features such as: T-STAR plus drive within a cylindrical head and a UNIQUE 4CUT point designed for quick and easy installation with no pre-drilling required. PowerTrim fasteners also feature a reverse double thread for PVC applications engineered to pull and hide pigtail shavings and eliminate bulging. Available in both #8 and #9 diameters and in lengths of 1-1/4", 1-1/2", 2", 2-1/2", 3-1/8", 4" and 5". spax.us





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Fortress Steel Pergolas

Fortress Building Products' newest category, pergolas, combine steel's weatherability and low maintenance qualities with its modern aesthetic that the manufacturer says brings lasting style to the backyard. The structural steel is dual-layer protected against fire, corrosion, twisting, insects, and rot. Customers can select from three freestanding pergola styles, including one Traditional and two Modern options. Customers can preview the Traditional and Modern pergola styles in a variety of formations using the Pergola Visualizer. Fortress pergolas offer dealers and distributors that currently stock Evolution steel deck framing a low barrier to entry, as the two steel building products share the same SKU. The assembly is backed by a 25-year limited manufacturer warranty. fortressbp.com/pergolas



Fantech Radon Alarm

Fantech has developed a Radon Alarm designed to alert homeowners if their active soil depressurization (ASD) radon mitigation system fails. The new alarm meets Section 1001 of the American Association of Radon Scientists and Technicians (AARST) CCAH national standard, and measures pressure differential changes based on internal sensors. An integrated teach-and-test feature sets the alarm trigger pressure level and confirms normal operation with audible and visual indicators. The alarm alerts residents at risk of a malfunctioning system and carcinogenic gas intrusion with audio and visual notifications. Additional features include a seven-day snooze function and a time delay that can be set to 24 or 96 hours, as well as permanent audible enable or disable capability. fantech.net

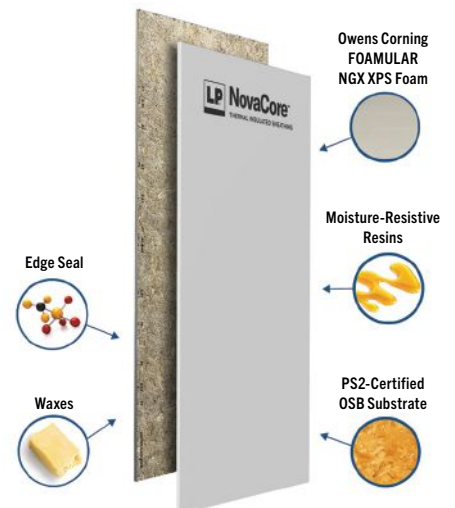


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LP NovaCore Thermal Insulated Sheathing is dual-layered and designed to protect structures against heat loss and gain. Structural OSB and XPS foam are bonded together to create an insulated wall panel that is said to be easy to install and can be handled, cut, and drilled like OSB, delivering an R-Value of 5 per inch of thickness. Provided that all panel edges are properly supported, LP NovaCore can be installed in vertical or horizontal orientations. lpcorp.com



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Milwaukee Tool SAWZALL blade

Milwaukee Tool has introduced the WRECKER with NITRUS CARBIDE SAWZALL blade, said to be the longest-lasting, fastest cutting, and most versatile blade for demolition and remodeling jobs. The WRECKER with NITRUS CARBIDE features a 6TPI design, engineered to be ideal for the fastest cuts in woods, metals, and abrasives. This blade is designed to eliminate the need for blade changes by having the capability to cut everything from wood with nails to thick metal. According to the manufacturer, its carbide blend, NITRUS CARBIDE, delivers the fastest cuts and longest life by dissipating heat better than any non-Nitrus blade in the industry. milwaukeetool.com



Dewalt ToughSystem 2.0 Full-Size Organizer

The ToughSystem 2.0 Full-Size Organizer offers a 44-lb. load capacity. Manufactured in the USA with global materials, the organizer is designed to keep workspaces clutter-free with two double removable cups, eight single removable cups, and a built-in compartment designed to accommodate long tools. According to the manufacturer, the container provides protection against dust and water damage and has durable metal-plastic front latches to withstand tough jobsite conditions. Users can customize their storage layout, as the unit connects to other ToughSystem products and can be attached with auto-connect side latches, or disconnected with the one-touch release feature. dewalt.com



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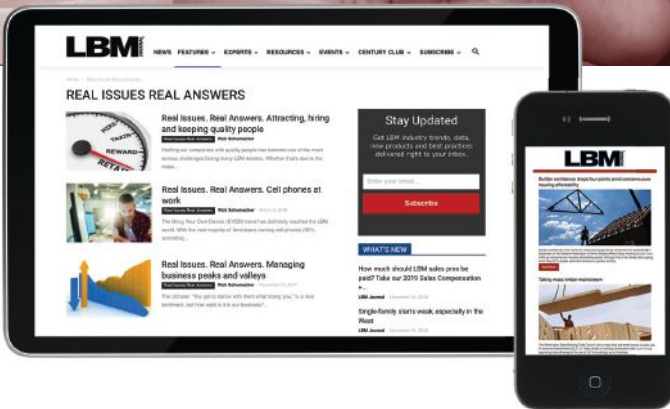
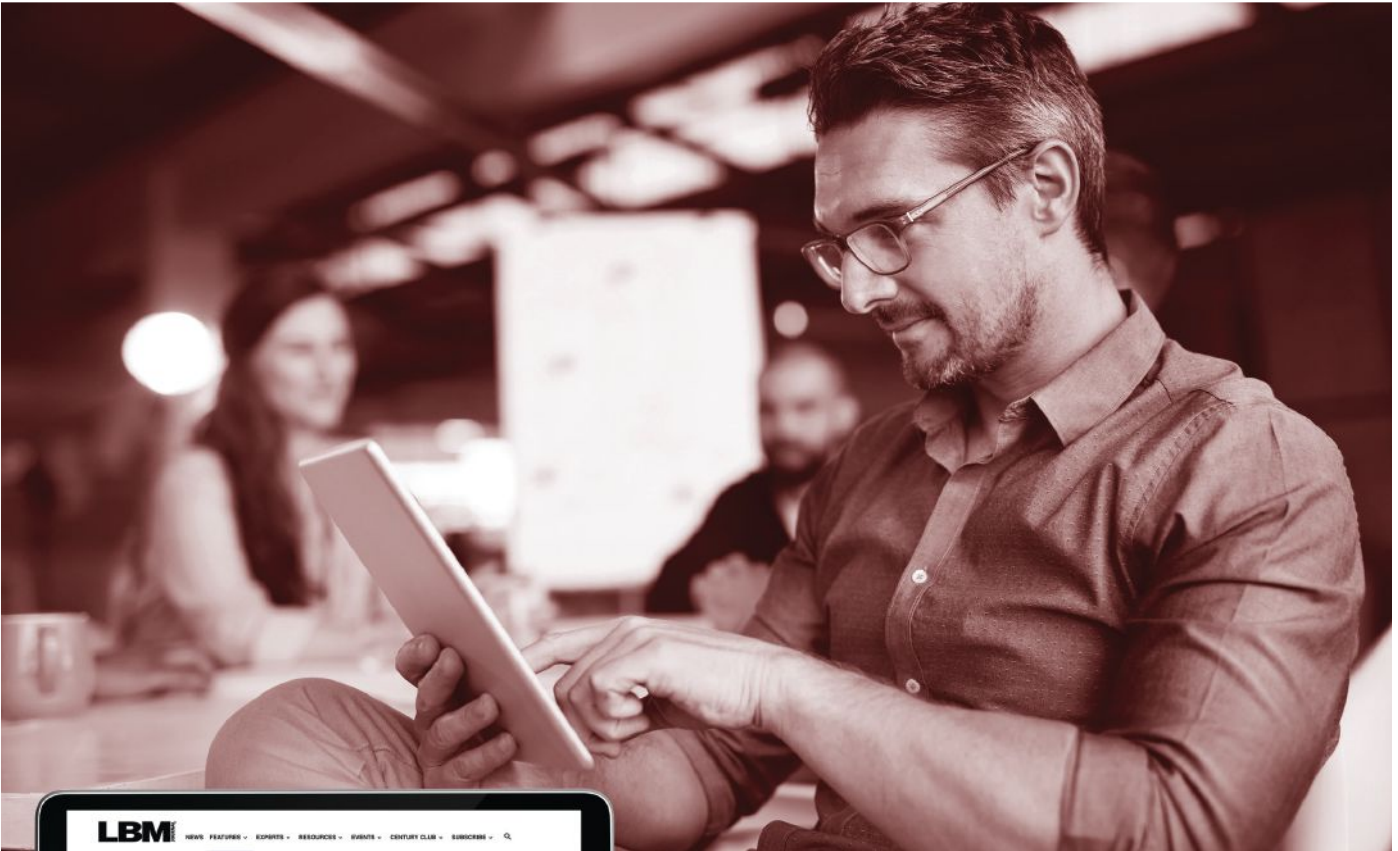
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Unified Purchasing Group (UPG)	31	801.784.8744	upg.org
Versatex	43	724.857.1111	versatex.com
Westlake Royal Building Products	OBC	800.521.8486	westlakeroyalbuildingproducts.com
Weyerhaeuser	10-11	800.525.5440	weyerhaeuser.com

*Denotes regional distribution.

Note: last-minute changes will affect the accuracy of this listing.

IBC=inside back cover, IFC=inside front cover, OBC=outside back cover, BB=belly band, INS=insert, PB=polybagged, WP=white paper.



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LBM STRATEGIES 
2022 CONFERENCE



THE INVISIBLE MAN

YOUR COMPANY HAS BECOME SO FOCUSED ON ATTRACTING YOUNG TALENT THAT SEASONED WORKERS LIKE YOU ARE QUESTIONING YOUR VALUE. WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

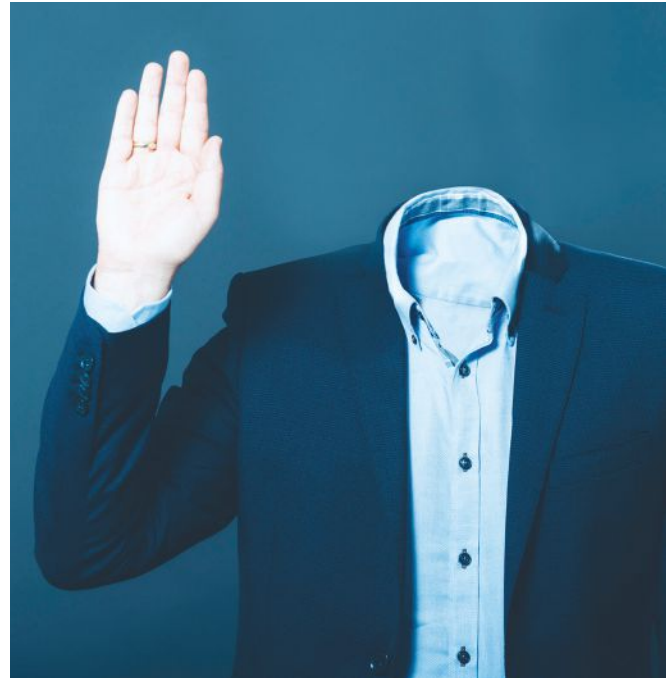
YOU'LL NEVER FORGET your first day at Startup Lumber back in 1998. What your new employer lacked in resources, it more than made up for in encouragement, positive energy, and a can-do (and will-do) attitude from the owners. Your company was the underdog, and better-established competitors derided the fact that much of the crew (including you) had little experience.

As it turned out, several builders were happy to give a young startup company a chance, so they rolled the dice... and your company delivered. It didn't take long before Startup Lumber had carved a healthy niche in serving small custom builders and pro remodelers. In those early years, the owners of your company truly appreciated all that you and your colleagues did. They made sure to thank you privately and recognize you in front of your peers. You were all learning together, building something that mattered, and that led to very low turnover. Indeed, most of the original employees are still there.

Over the past couple of years, as sales have grown significantly resulting in you and your colleagues working longer and harder, your company began to aggressively focus on attracting young people as employees. At first, this was very welcome—both for the infusion of fresh ideas and energy, and for the help with the increased workload. But as the new people have come aboard, there's a growing sense among you and your colleagues that your roles are less valued.

You've seen the job ads and the generous signing bonus and starting pay your company is offering—which is dangerously close to what you're earning after more than 20 years with the company. But it's not just the money. It's the extended vacation that they're offered in their first year with the company—which you had to work years to earn. It's the job flexibility that they enjoy because quality of life is important to young professionals. But the flexibility they enjoy requires you and your colleagues to take on their duties. And what about your family, and your quality of life?

Though you were a key part of getting Startup Lumber off the ground and building it into what it is today, you're feeling like your newest co-workers are getting pay levels that they haven't earned and are being celebrated and rewarded for things you and your long-term colleagues do day-in and day-out, with no thank yous or recognition. You're feeling invisible, and you don't like it. What would you do?



▶ CAST YOUR VOTE ONLINE AT: LBMJOURNAL.COM

- **MOVE ON.** With your experience, you'll have no trouble securing a new job with healthy pay and benefits, with a company that truly values what you bring to the table.
- **TALK IT OUT.** Sit down with the owner, tell them what you're thinking, and ask how important you are to the future of Startup Lumber. Put the ball in their court, and see where they stand.
- **LEAVE IT ALONE.** You earn a good living, are paid well, have solid benefits, and enjoy the people you work with. Focus on what you have, not what you don't.
- **DEMAND MORE.** Do your research, find out what someone with your experience, skills, and responsibilities earns elsewhere. Then demand that they match it, or you're out.

SOMETHING ELSE?

If you'd take a different plan of attack, email your suggested solution to James@LBMJournal.com. If we publish your reply, we'll send you an LBM Journal mug.



LBM CENTURY CLUB HONORS 100-YEAR-OLD BUSINESSES

The LBM Century Club was founded on the simple belief that companies that have been around for 100 years deserve to be recognized. Launched in 2016, the LBM Century Club has grown to 171 members, with more coming in each month. In all, the companies have provided 21,501 years of combined service to their communities.

By no means does the LBM Journal's Century Club list include every 100-year-old company... at least not yet. That's where you come in. Do you work for, or know of a lumberyard or building materials retailer that is 100 or more years old? Send them our way, so that we can give them the recognition they deserve. Century Club members receive a certificate for their store, window decals for their front doors, free admission to the LBM Strategies Conference where they are guests of honor at a Century Club induction ceremony, as well as recognition in their local media, all free of charge. Nomination is easy! Just visit LBMJournal.com/nominate and answer a few questions. We'll take it from there. For a complete listing of LBM Century Club members, visit lbmjournal.com/lbm-century-club.

THE MOST RECENT INDUCTEES INTO THIS EXCLUSIVE CLUB INCLUDE:

BRUCE HALL CORP. Cooperstown, NY	est. 1921	HERMANN LUMBER COMPANY Hermann, MO	est. 1922
HILLS FLAT LUMBER CO. Grass Valley, CA	est. 1921	BARDEN LUMBER Boyne City, MI	est. 1922
MENTOR LUMBER & SUPPLY CO. Mentor, OH	est. 1922	MAZE LUMBER Peru, IL	est. 1848
TULLY BUILDING SUPPLY, INC. Tully, NY	est. 1921	PARKES LUMBER CO. Lawrenceburg, TN	est. 1896
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